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MULDOON'S FLATS.

BY TOM TEASER.



Then came Muldoon on his big, bony horse, the plumes nodding gaily above his head, his regalia bobbing up and down in time with the beating of his heart. "It's a proud day for me, so it is," he mused, "and if Bedalia could see me now, she'd be willin' to die, be heavens!"

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MULDOON'S FLATS

By TOM TEASER,

Author of "Muldoon in Ireland; or, The Solid Man on the Old Sod," "Muldoon's Hotel," etc., etc.

PART I.

WHEN Muldoon returned from his tour of Ireland, he found his flats in a state of confusion.

Terrence Muldoon was an Irish-American citizen, somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty years old, residing with his wife and son in New York.

He was very rich, and part of his property was a double apartment house in Forty something street, on the east side of town, not far from the Grand Central Depot and easy of access by several street car lines.

Mr. Muldoon had formerly run a hotel on the same site, but had torn it down and erected a block of flats in its stead.

He had been to Europe and around the world, out West and down South, had been interested in base-ball and had been alderman, senator and nearly everything, and at last, for a change, had revisited Ireland.

On his return he found the flats being run not at all to his taste.

He had built them with the idea of having them thoroughly high toned.

Big rents were charged and aristocratic tenants only were wanted.

When he went away there were four or five such families in his apartments.

When he returned there were none of them, but he had more tenants.

The janitor had rented the apartments as fast as they were vacated to less high-toned people at a reduced rent.

He argued that it was better to have a full house at twenty-five dollars a month than only a quarter of one at forty.

So far he had the right of it, but he didn't go far enough.

He was satisfied if the tenants paid their rent properly, without bothering his head to see what sort of people they were.

When Muldoon visited the flats on his return, he found the Piscatelli family, Italians, consisting of father, mother, four children and a boarder in one of his third story flats.

The Dago kept a large fruit and peanut stand, his wife went out house cleaning, Rocco played the fiddle in an East side theater, Gennaro was a third rate fresco artist, Francesca sold flowers, and Paulina carried on a news stand on a small scale, the lodger, Filippo Lazarini, was a barber.

On the floor above was the Finnegan family, the father, a bricklayer, the son a policeman, the daughter studying for the variety stage and the mother a virago, with a red face and a shrill voice and a faculty for always getting in trouble.

On the fifth floor over the Finnegans was a Dutch saloon-keeper named Schumacher, his wife, three grown up sons, a girl four years old and a baby of as many months.

Across the hall from the Dutchman was Pierre Dubois, a waiter in a French restaurant, his wife, a modiste, his son Emile, a hair-dresser, his daughter Pelagie, a wax flower artist and a cousin, Victorine Gros-tete, who gave French lessons at home.

Besides these there was a hod carrier, an ice wagon driver and a longshoreman in one flat, the latter's wife being the

housekeeper, a lot of jabbering Swedes in another, and the rest vacant.

The first day Muldoon went to the flats, the Dago's wife was frying onions, Mrs. Finnegan was cooking cabbage, Mrs. Dubois had garlic, and somebody else had turnips. The odors were just terrific, but the noises were fully as loud.

Mary Jane Finnegan was singing Throw him down, McCloskey, the French girl was conjugating a verb, the Italian woman was scolding her husband, the Dutch baby was yelling itself hoarse, and half a dozen half-grown kids went racing through the halls and up and down the stairs like mad.

"Be quiet there, can't yez?" cried Muldoon. "This isn't a tinimint house, be heavens!"

"Petter you was mind out your own bitzness, once," said one of the kids.

"Ah, go take a skate, cully, your brains are leaking," said another.

"You ain't der landlord, what call are you got to say anything?"

"Who is then, if I'm not?" asked Muldoon.

"De janitor, o' course, in de cellar. De real landlord is an old stuff travelin' for fun."

Then Muldoon visited the janitor in the cellar.

"It's a foine set av tenants yez have put in, intirely," said Muldoon.

"What matter, if they pay rent?"

"Phwat do yez charge thim?"

"Twenty dollars."

"Faix, that's given 'em away."

"It's all they're worth."

"Well, where are yer accounts for this month?"

"Nobody's paid anything yet."

"Sure, it's the middle of the month?"

"Well, they're slow pay."

"Then give them all notice to quit."

"You'll never let the flats if I do."

"Niver mind that, I'm doing business me own way."

"You won't get a tenant."

"I'll have bettther ones or none."

"What do you know about letting flats? That's the janitor's business."

"Begorry, thin, I'll make it mine. I'll be me own janitor, be heavens! Yez can get out!"

The janitor went out that very day.

Muldoon presently discovered that it was quite time that he did so.

Upon endeavoring to collect his rent for that month, every one of his tenants showed him a receipt.

Moreover, they had paid twenty-five dollars instead of twenty.

Receipts for other months showed the same condition of affairs.

In addition, the tenants all complained that he had stolen coal, wood and groceries from them.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen," said Muldoon, "I'm going to be me own janitor afther this, and there will be no more cause av complaint."

Muldoon had long ago retired from business and he could do this as well as not.

His son Roger was married and looked after his fatner's mining and other in-

terests, and had never visited the flats, leaving that to others.

They all lived in a fine house on Madison avenue, but Muldoon fitted up an office in the rooms occupied by the late janitor and went there every day.

He had for an assistant, to do the drudgery work, a red-headed youth called Nibbsey, who was nearly as great a character in his ways as Muldoon himself.

Nibbsey was good nature itself, never got ruffled, was always singing, never complained and was not to be terrified or sat on by any one.

Cheeky, like all New York boys of that class, he was nevertheless thoroughly devoted to the Muldoons, and the word of his boss, as he called Muldoon himself, was law to him and was never questioned.

"Geel der boss is goin' ter run de flats hisself, is he?" he muttered, when he heard the news. "Dat means a good job for me nibbs. I'm dead tired o' wearin' good clothes and waitin' on de door. Disting just suits me."

Muldoon could not have had a better helper than Nibbsey, in any event.

Hard work did not hurt him, he could talk back to any one, he never lost his temper, and he was a terror for working practical jokes on everybody.

He was like Roger Muldoon, in that respect, although not as good, for Roger had worked snaps on Muldoon for years and was as fresh as ever at it.

Muldoon established himself in the cellar as janitor, with Nibbsey as his assistant, and expected that now everything would go on swimmingly.

A few mornings after his taking the position, Mrs. Piscatelli came into the office and said:

"Mist' Muldoon, you doo me a fav', you wanta me toa stay in youra flat?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Piscatory, the wishes av me tinants shall always be respected."

"Dera you tella data Irishawoman in der fort'a flat no makea so mucha noise. Her daught' alla time sing Annie Roon', Com-erada; no can heara nothing."

"She annoys ye, does she, Mrs. Fricadelli?"

"She makea too mucha rack', alla time upseta chair, dancea on floor, bab' no can sleep."

"Whisper, me good woman, I'm goin' to have all the Irish turned out av me flats."

"Ah, you gooda man, Mist' Muldoon, you ver' gooda man. Grazzia, me tanka you."

"Oh, don't mintion it, Mrs. Pizzerelli, it's a move I have long contemplated and I view with pleasure its immejit consummation."

"You firea alla Irishaman out?"

"Yis."

"Data alla right, you gooda man, me tanka you."

The signora left, and half an hour afterwards Mrs. Finnegan came down.

"Mr. Muldoon, sor, I desoire a few minutes private and confidential conversation wid yez," she began. "I'm not a quar'lsome woman and it's extramely dis-tasteful to me to hov to make anny com-

plaints, but I must declare in the most positiv terrums that I won't pit up wid or endure the annoyances to which I am daily subjiected be that—"

Muldoon checked this flood of eloquence by asking:

"Well, Mrs. Finnegan, ma'am, if there's anny way be which I can alleviate or palliate yer sufferings, be plazed to state it."

"Thank ye, Mr. Muldoon, I know that ye will appreciate the situation. Thim Italians an the nixt flat below do make such a noise wid their jabbering and yelling that it's not a wink av sleep I can get the night, and thin the smells that do come up from their kitchen air that stiffling that it's a wondher I'm aloive to—"

"Say no more, me dear Mrs. Finnegan," said the diplomatic Muldoon. "I'm goin' to have all the Dagos pit out av the flat."

"Oh, well, thin, if that's the case, I've nothing more to say, and I must express me satisfaction at finding ye so accommodating and obliging to a poor, down-throdden, over-worked woman like meself, for I'm sure I appreciate yer consideration and wud do anything in me power to reciprocate the binivolint and—"

"Yes, the Italians must go, Mrs. Finnegan, be assured of thot," said Muldoon.

Mrs. Finnegan went away satisfied and Muldoon, as he lighted a prime Havana, remarked, sagely, to himself:

"Be heavens, it's a Solomon, I am. No wan could have got over the difficulties bettther than I did. It's a wise mon that knows how to settle disputes bechune his tinants."

Presently Nibbsey entered, his patched trousers held up by one suspender, and the collar of his blue checked jumper scraping his ear, and said:

"Say, boss, de Dutchwoman on de top floor says she move 'f Frenchy don't make less noise."

"All right; tell her we'll have only Dutch people in the house."

"Yes; an' Frenchy, she says dat she's goin' 'f Dutchy don't shut up."

"Well, thin, tell her that we're goin' to make a second Bleecker street av the place and have only Frinch people in it."

"Den der Swedes say dey can't stand de racket of de tarriers over deir heads."

"Tell thim that in a few days they'll think they've moved back to Sweden. I'll have a quite lot av flats, no matther how many lies I tell, be heavens!"

During the afternoon, while Muldoon was away, Mrs. Piscatelli remarked triumphantly to Mrs. Finnegan in the course of a sqabble on the stairs that there would be no no more Irish in the house, Muldoon having said so.

"It's a liar ye air, Macaroni, it's the Italians that are goin', and Misther Muldoon tould me so himself no later than half-past tin o'clock."

"Me teenk de Ireeish go oud forst alretty," said Mrs. Nillssen. "Meesdez Mooldon told me so sheself dees morgen."

The Swedish lady had her door open, heard the discussion and joined in.

Madame Dubois, Frau Schumacher and the 'longshoreman's wife now had something to say, and Muldoon's diplomacy was laid bare.

The women agreed to make common cause against that tyrant of a janitor and landlord to punish him for his perfidy.

During the next orenoon, when the husbands of those alretty women were all away at their work, Nibbsey came into the office and said:

"Say, boss, de Dutchwoman on der top floor wants to see yer right away."

"Did she intimate to ye the nature av her communication, me bye?" asked Muldoon.

"Do yer mean did she tell me wot she wanted wid yer?"

"Yis."

"Naw; she just said she wanted to see yer, dat's all."

Muldoon climbed the five flights to Mrs. Schumacher's flat and knocked at the door.

"Come right in, Misdher Multoon," said the lady, opening the portal. "I was send for you. Nice wetter, don't it? I dinks so neider. Take a seat und made yoursell at home."

"Did yez want to see me on anny particular business, Mrs. Shoemaker?" asked Muldoon, seating himself.

"Yah! I was want to saw you most bar-ticular," said the Dutchwoman, locking the door. "You vhas a sugger once, und I vhas got a mind to slug you on der kopf."

"Slug me on the coop, ma'm, and for why?" asked Muldoon, getting up in a hurry.

"For why you vhas a snoozer und no good, dot's why."

"Really, me good woman," began Muldoon.

"I don't vas your goot vomans und you vas a sugger und a loafer mans, und a arisdocrat, und you don't had der senses mit a shicken, ain't it? I tolt you dot behind your face once und I vash't ashamed off it, neider, besides."

"Faix, I don't under—"

"Shut oud once und listen mit me. You was a loafer, und I don't care. So you was turned oud all dose Chermans fem'lies, ain't it? I just lige to saw you do dot one time already, you Irish loafer mans."

"Yis, but, Mrs. Shoemaker, you wor misinformed—"

"I tolt my mans when she comes mit der house inside, und I bate you he baralyze you mit a glub, you nasty, mean, gondemptable loafer, und don'd you forgot it."

Muldoon forgot himself, and lost his temper.

"Go on, ye Dutch sausage," he muttered. "Wan Irishman can lick ten Dutchmin anny day."

"Maybe you vas find oud vat one Cherman vomans could done, you Irisher loafer!" cried Gretchen, in a rage, grabbing a broom from behind the door.

She gave Muldoon a belt over the head, and he made a break.

He could not get out at the regular exit, as Frau Schumacher chased him up and gave him another whack.

There was a window open in the kitchen, and he made a dash for that.

The fire-escape landing was just outside. This was his only hope, and he made a bolt for it.

He reached it and hurried down the ladder.

His troubles were not over by any means, however.

"Took dot, you loafer mans!" cried the Dutchwoman, emptying a pail of dirty water on him.

The Frenchwoman heard the racket, and came to see what it was all about.

"Hein, sacre cochon, you haf ze grande impudence to tell me I sall go out of your meezerable house?" she cried. "Tell me how you like zat?"

She emptied a pan of garbage on Muldoon's head, as she asked the question.

"Bad luck to um, there's that baste av a landlord!" cried Mrs. Finnegan, rushing to the window.

The Swedish lady was just emptying a scuttle of coal on him.

Mr. Finnegan seized a wet mop and banged Muldoon in the ear with it as he passed.

The Italian signora, on the floor below, grabbed a rolling-pin, and Muldoon caught a whack with it before he got by.

Then the whole gang joined in, and Muldoon thought he would never get down alive.

Mops, brooms, coal, shovels, and umbrellas were brandished at him.

Cold water, hot water, coal, garbage, ashes, and everything else came showering upon him.

Two or three women in the yard below, hanging out clothes, heard the fracas, and laid for him.

"Be heavens, I'm a lucky man av I get out av this alive!" he gasped, as he hurried down the slanting ladder.

He got down, but there was more to be done besides that.

There was a gantlet of a dozen angry and indignant women to run, before he could reach the office.

Those whom he had escaped above joined those below.

As he struck the ground, and made a dash for the door leading to the house, they all went at him.

"You will turn out all the Irish, hey?"

Whack!

"You tinka Italiano no good, you Irisha loaf?"

Biff!

"Sacre, you inzolt ze lily of ze beautiful France, heine?"

Plunk!

"What's der matter mit dose Chermans, mein freund?"

Spat!

"Kill the dirthy snoozer!"

"Laid der sugger oud, once!"

"Breaka the facea, smasha de nose!"

"Kill ze meesrable peeg!"

"Belt blazes out av um!"

"Heet him meed a glub alretty!"

"Thump um!"

"Jump on um!"

"Paralyze him!"

The whole gang was talking at once.

Brooms, shovels, pails, mops and lumps of coal were their weapons.

Muldoon made a dash for the door and got hit a dozen times.

Then Mrs. Finnegan threw a lump of coal at him.

The lady's aim was like that of most women.

She never touched Muldoon.

Instead, she caught the signora in the eye.

The dusky Italian clubbed the blond Celt with a broomstick instantly.

"Go an, ye Dago, who be yez hittin'?" shrieked the Finnegan.

"Me killa you, me killa you, you throwa coala, Irisha loaf, flannela-moutha Micka."

"Don't ye dar' call me flannen-mouthed, ye Italian beggar. I'm bettther nor ye anny day."

"Corna beefa Irisha loaf, eata swilla, no paya de rent, makea too mucha de noise. Sacarement, whena my mana comea home he killa you."

"Yis, he will—not. Go an, ye lazy, rag-picking, garbage 'ating son av a hand-organ, I don't car' that for yez!" and Finnegan tossed her head, stuck her fat red hands on her hips and spat at the signora.

It was a lucky diversion for Muldoon.

The other women stopped to listen to the dispute between Italy and Ireland.

That gave the solid man a chance to make a break.

He rushed inside, closed the door, pushed the bolt clean home and then paused to take breath.

"It's a wondher I'm alive at all, be heavens, and I don't know av I am," he gasped.

"What's de matter, boss?" asked Nibbsey, as Muldoon entered the office.

"I don't know, faix, but av anny ov thim women make anny more complaints to yez, don't let me know a worrud about it."

"What's de matter out in de yard, boss?"

Several hearty thumps were heard on the door, and hence Nibbsey's question.

"I've locked thim Amazonians out. Av they want to get to their flats let them take the fire escape."

"Did dey chase yer, boss?"

"They did, be heavens!"

"Shall I turn de hose on 'em? It's out in de yard."

"Av yez think it's safe, ye can, but yez must do it an yer own responsibility."

That red-headed boy hitched up his trousers, expectorated on his hands and walked to the rear door.

He listened a few moments and then cautiously sallied forth.

The women were going up the fire-escape.

In a minute he flew back, turned on the water and then rushed out again.

It was a good fire-escape, but it was no good in case of water.

Nibbsey just soaked the heels of those retreating women.

"Sass my boss, will yer?" he remarked.

"Well, I guess not!"

Those who lived on the first floor escaped, the second floor lodgers didn't get much, but the others got it solid.

That hose did not carry to the top of the house, but it sent a stream high enough to make lots of fun for those women.

The signora got more of a bath than she had had in years, Mrs. Finnegan thought she was drowned, and Mrs. Schumacher said she knew it would rain if she left her umbrella at home.

The Italian woman dove into her own windows and shut them down, and Mrs

Finnegan, being at odds with her, could not seek shelter in her flat.

"Well, I take me oat'f I didn't give them crows a soaking," laughed Nibbsey, laying down the hose. "I'd like ter see dem give de boss any more guff when I'm 'round."

It was likely that those women would lay for that red-headed youth, but that didn't bother him the least bit.

"I soaked 'em, boss," he said, after turning off the water. "Take me oat' you'd ha' died laughin' if you'd saw them."

Then he danced three or four steps of a jig and began to sing:

"Will yez all be there when I tackle Paddy Flynn,
Will yez all be there when the—"

"Front!" bawled Muldoon. "Go gargle cuspidores and shut up that n'ise."

"All right, boss," said Nibbsey, taking his departure. "Too bad you ain't got no taste fur music. I'd give yer a new song and dance I'm learnin', if yer had."

"Go an, ye robin red head and niver mind me or me ear for music," said Muldoon, and Nibbsey went.

The women complained to their husbands, but as the latter went to work before Muldoon got around it did no good, and things went on as before.

About a week after this, Muldoon said to Nibbsey, when he came down to the flats:

"Go up and collect Mrs. Nelson's rint, ye young grasshopper, and tell her it was jue yesterday a week ago."

"Dat's de Swede woman on de second floor, ain't it?"

"Yis."

"She ain't here no more, boss."

"She ain't?"

"Nixey."

"And when did she go out?"

"Last week."

"Put a sign in the windy, thin. We must have a tinant at wanst."

"Oh, de flat's taken, boss."

"It is?" exclaimed Muldoon, in surprise.

"Yare; taken yes'day."

"Begorry, I don't seem to know very much about me own business. Did yer rint the flat, me boy?"

"Naw, de party just moved in, dat's all."

"Did they pay rint?"

"Naw; said you'd know it was all right. You know dem—Whiskers and his family."

"I have no one in me large circle av acquaintances be that name," said Muldoon. "Please be more explicit in yer descriptions."

"Ah, go on, boss. You know who I mean. Big di'mond, dizzy clothes, black-in' brush mustache, lots o' guff."

"Be heavens, yez can niver mean the Hon. Mike Growler?" cried Muldoon, in surprise.

"Cert, dat's him."

"And has he moved into the flat the Swede left?"

"Yare. He sayed it would be all right. Got his ole woman and de two kids and dey're wuss'n dey ever was."

"And phwat evil wind had to blow me breezy brother-in-law to New York again? I thor he wor in the West."

"He told me that the Lily of Nevada bloomed better in de city dan anywheres else and dat he meant to take root here forever."

"That's his cheek ivery time," muttered Muldoon. "I don't suppose he has the laste intentions of payin' anny rint while he's getting rooted, aither."

"Put on a lot o' lugs, just like he used ter, boss, an' dat boy o' his'n gives me a pain in de neck. Kin I slug him, boss, if he gets too lippy?"

"Yez have my permission to kill um; yis, and his father too, so long as yez don't minfion my name and don't ask me to pay the funeral expenses."

The Hon. Mike Growler, or the Lily of Nevada, as he poetically termed himself, was Muldoon's brother-in-law.

He had come from the flush and hectic West in the first place, or had been discovered there by Muldoon, at all events, and had ever since been a leech on the worthy man's flesh.

He claimed to have been a congressman, but he was a colossal liar and one could

believe that as much as his other statements.

At intervals, varying from six months to a couple of years, he would turn up with his wife, who was Muldoon's sister, and settle himself down in comfort at his brother-in-law's expense.

Romeo Growler and Evangeline ditto, aged eleven and nine, were his children, and two homelier, tougher, more disagreeable brats couldn't be found in all the country.

The Hon. Mike occasionally made money, but he never spent it if he could help it, and he borrowed from Muldoon, or the latter's wife, whenever he could.

He had been head clerk in the hotel which Muldoon had once kept on the site of the flats, and had given a certain amount of service for the money he got, but now there wasn't even an excuse for having him around.

Roger wouldn't let him in the house on Madison avenue when he had called a few days before this, and the flat was the only available roosting place.

Muldoon was about to go up-stairs to investigate, after hearing Nibbsey's statement, when the Hon. Mike appeared *in propria persona*.

He wore a rusty suit or rather loud clothes, a red cravat, a Pony Moore or Alvin Joslin diamond, a white hat, a big mustache and a look of exceeding toughness.

"Hallo, Mul, old stick-in-the-mud!" he said. "How goes everything? De Lily of Nevada still blooms?"

"Yis, I perceive it does, albeit, somewhat faded."

"Dat's all right, Mul. All she needs is a little water and fresh soil to be der daisiest old plant in der hull garden."

"For wather, read whisky, and for soil substitute dust, otherwise rocks or money, and yer meaning is quite clear. Why, in the name av Julius Sayser didn't yez stay West whin yer got there?"

"'Cos I'm a bloomin' old fashion-plate of sociability, dat's why, and I only shine in good society. I'm a gem o' der fust water, I am, and I ain't at home in any seven by nine town. New York just gives me room to swell in and don't yer forget it."

"Yez have no money, I suppose, to swell your pockets, and yer head too, occasionally, I presume."

"Ah, I ain't no bloomin' old miser wid a yaller nightcap and holey slippers, hugging der money bags like dey had wings and might get away from me. I spend money free, I do, and yer can put it on der slate. To be cert'inly, I ain't got no money, but what's de odds? Ain't you got enough for both of us?"

"And so ye've moved into wan av me vacant flats?" asked Muldoon, ignoring the gentle hint conveyed in Mr. Growler's last remark.

"Course I have. You ain't no hard-hearted brother, you ain't, to turn yer sister out o' doors. We knowed yer'd be glad to see us."

"Oh, yis, I'm glad to see your back," said Muldoon, sadly, "but the trouble is I don't see it often enough, be heavens!"

"If dat's a joke, Mul, old sport, you kin make me a plan of it and let me study it when I are got more time," said the Hon. Mike, pushing out his huge mustache and looking awfully tough.

Muldoon knew that he was in for it, and so he very philosophically held his peace.

The only thing for him to do was to try and find some employment for his tough brother-in-law, and so reduce the drain on his own pocket.

He was rich, to be sure, but, all the same, even a rich man has objections to being bled to death.

In the afternoon Muldoon went out to take a walk, feeling the need of rest and refreshment.

On the very first corner he met the Hon. Mike, with a flower in his buttonhole and a stick in his hand.

"Hallo, Mul, old cheroot!" said the Western statesman. "Going for a geysir? I'm wid yer. Come on, it's like old times fur me and you to take a sachay together."

Muldoon would rather be alone than with Mr. Growler, but the latter had hooked arms, and there was no help for it, so off they went.

In a few minutes they suddenly came upon Hippocrates Burns, the mad poet.

Mr. Burns was an old acquaintance, generally in hard luck, and was almost as big an incubus as Mr. Growler himself.

Muldoon supported him for weeks together, and when he now saw him again, after an absence of a year or more, he sighed.

Mr. Burns was an unappreciated host, but at this time he had taken on a new wrinkle.

He was a disciple of Delsarte, and accompanied his speech with appropriate gestures, supposed to express the emotion he felt.

"Aha, it is me old friend, me two old friends," he said, dramatically pressing his hands upon his liver. "I cannot say how pleased I am."

"Thin don't," said Muldoon. "I don't think I cud stand anny pomes this mornin'. Will yez have something?"

Mr. Growler and the poet seized upon Muldoon and dragged him to the nearest hostelry before he could change his mind.

Here they imbibed, and then, while holding up the counter, talked over old times.

"That's a fine flower yez hav in yer coat, Mike," said Muldoon. "Yez niver wore flowers before. How comes it that ye make a walking conservatory av yersilf neow?"

"Oh, I got to put on style," replied the Hon. Mike. "I'm one o' der four hundred, I am, and all der gals is dead stuck on me. Dat ain't no flower, though."

"Faix, thin, it's a very good imitation av wan."

"It's an electric alarm, dat's what it is," said Mike, turning back some of the petals of his artificial rose. "Dere's de button, see?"

"And for why do ye carry an electric alarum on yer coat?"

"To ring up chestnuts, or ring der bell on a feller when it's his turn ter treat."

"And all yez do is touch the button?"

"Dat's all."

"Faix, there's no room for an electric battery behind that."

"Yes, dere is—lots. Just try it and see if dey ain't."

Muldoon was just fool enough to press the button in the rose.

He got a needle in his finger for his pains.

"Oh, glory! yer rose has thorns!" he yelled, clapping his finger in his mouth and dancing about on one foot.

"Dat's one on you, Mul," laughed Mike. "Shoot me, if yer ain't der same bloomin' old baby you always was. You wouldn't tumble if der High Bridge fell on yer."

"Faix, I had no idee that yez had an infernal machine an yer coat," said Muldoon, sucking his finger.

"Oh, you ain't half eddicated, you ain't," said Mike. "Yer gotter take lots o' lessons fust."

"Hould an—give it to me," said Muldoon. "Here comes the Alderman, on his day off. Wait till yez see me work him."

The Alderman, and no one called him anything else, and few knew what his name was, kept a saloon down-town and was an old friend of our hero's.

"Hallo, Terry," he said, as he caught sight of Muldoon. "How is iverything?"

"Foine. How's yerself?"

"Iligint. Have something."

"Hould an, we've got to ring that up," said Muldoon.

Then he explained the electric button business to the Alderman.

The latter never tumbled, but pressed the button.

In a second, however, he up with his left and pasted Muldoon under the ear.

Down went the solid man and sat in a big stone spittoon.

"Give me an electric shock, will yez?" cried the Alderman. "Well, I guess not."

Muldoon was dazed for a few seconds, and then he got up, turned to the Hon. Mike and said:

"Take yer ould thricks and go to Chicago wid them and start a world's fair, ye black-muzzled tarrier. I war niver cut out for a practical joker."

PART II.

IF I don't want me flats all filled wid min like Mike Growler, what'll never pay a cint ov rent," said Muldoon to his wife that afternoon, "I've got to fill up the vacant ones at wanst wid good paying tenants or I might as well shut up the place, be heavens!"

It was two days after this when walking down the avenue he suddenly met his brother Dan.

He had not seen Dan for a year or more, since he had given up keeping the hotel, in fact.

Dan looked as if he had been playing in hard luck and was rather seedy.

"Hallo, Dan!" said Muldoon, "yez look as if ye'd been having yer leg pulled at the races."

"How are ye, Terry?" saluted Dan. "How is iverything?"

"Foine."

"I hear ye've been to Ireland?"

"Yis."

"Ye're livin' the same place, I suppose?"

"Yes, the sheriff hasn't sold me out yet."

"How's the wife?"

"She's well, thank ye."

"And Roger?"

"He's blooming; he's married to an heir-ess."

"Ye don't say?"

"Oh, but I do."

"Well, well!"

"And how are ye yerself, Dan?" asked Muldoon.

"Oh, I'm doing fairly."

"How's that ould termagant av a wife av yours?"

"She's well, thank ye."

"No, be heavens, don't thank me for that!" laughed Muldoon. "Av her health depended on me ye'd hov to call in the undertaker. There's no love lost bechune me and that ould vixen."

"Ye don't appreciate her?" said Dan, who really did not like his wife much better than his brother did.

He had married her thinking that she had money.

She had none to speak of and he was soaked, and she had been fooled in much the same way.

She was a sour-tempered old woman when Dan had married her and she hadn't improved any since.

"Where are yez livin' now, Dan?" asked Muldoon.

"Here in the city."

"Alone?"

"No, me wife and family are wid me."

"I never knew yez had a family, Dan."

"Me wife's pug dog."

"Oh, that's it. It was a tarrier before."

"Yis, but now it's a pug."

"And where are yez livin'?"

"In a flat."

"A whole flat for two av yez and a dog?"

"We're thinking av taking a boarder."

"Where is yer flat? I'd like to know so that I can steer clear av yer wife."

"It's in Forty-something street, on the east side."

"Is it now?" said Muldoon.

"Yis," said Dan, with a quiet smile.

"It's wan that Mike Growler recommended to me. He's livin' in wan av thim himself, just across the hall from me. Drop around and see me wan av those days. We'll be glad to see yez. Tra-la, Terry, skip the gutter."

Muldoon was simply paralyzed.

The worst had happened, just as he had feared.

"Dan and his woife and a pug dog in wan av me flats!" he gasped. "Be heavens, the whole gang'll be there next!"

It certainly looked as if all Muldoon's relations, connections and acquaintances were going to quarter themselves upon him. The Hon. Mike and his brother Dan had already done so, and there were more yet to be heard from.

"Begob, Burns the mad pote'll be livin' there before I know it," he muttered, "and maybe the Alderman, and Mulcahey, and Edward Geoghegan, and Budweiser, and Major Buster and all av thim."

The persons mentioned were all old acquaintances of Muldoon's, and some of them had boarded at the hotel.

The prospect of the gang settling down upon him was not at all a pleasant one

and he determined to fill up his flats just as soon as he could. He went off immediately and inserted advertisements in several papers, offering first-class apartments at little more than a nominal rent.

"I'd sooner let thim go for nothing to people I don't know than let the gang get in," he muttered. "The nixt thing I know, Sarsfield Hoolihan, Bedalia's brother, will be over and wantin' to live wid me, the vilyan."

He had finished up this business when he met his son Roger, on lower Broadway.

"Hallo, pop, how goes it?" said the young man.

"Faix, I'm worried to death wid that flat av moine!"

"Come with me and take a Turkish bath, then, governor. You'll feel better after it. I'm just going myself."

"Maybe it wouldn't be a bad idee," said Muldoon. "Where do yez go?"

"Down here a few blocks. Come on, it'll make another man of you."

"Faix, I think I will," and off they started together.

Roger had not proposed the thing for fun, but he was likely to get some sport out of it just the same, as he did out of most everything.

Arrived at the bath they were soon in the hot room, stretched out upon reclining chairs enjoying the summer heat.

Roger had spoken to an attendant before going in, having Muldoon's interest at heart of course.

"Tub of hot water, please," said Roger, as he sat down.

"Bring me wan too," said Muldoon.

The attendant brought a small tub and placed it in front of Muldoon.

The latter planked his feet in, but immediately yanked them out.

"Howly fiddler! did yez think I wanted to boil them?" he yelled.

"What's the matter?" asked Roger. "Is it too cold?"

"Too cold, indeed!" snorted Muldoon. "No, it's too hot. Faix, the skin is scorched off me."

"Oh, I guess not," said Roger, putting his hand in the water. "That isn't hot, pop. Try it."

Muldoon did try it.

The water was far from hot.

In fact it was ice cold.

He expected it would be hot and the difference was what made him think the water was boiling.

"Begorry, I tho't I was scalded," he muttered, "and it's ice water. That's what imagination'll do for yez. Here, take it away, Ah Sin, and fetch me some that's warmer."

This time he got it right and he settled himself down to the full enjoyment of a luxurious perspiration.

After half an hour of this sort of business an attendant clad mostly in his own native innocence came in and invited Muldoon to the shampooing studio.

He was thin and dyspeptic-looking, that attendant was.

It really did not seem as if he would be able to squeeze the water out of a pot of butter.

Muldoon looked at him and remarked to himself:

"Faix, I'll have it aisy wid that mon. He can't hurt a floy, he can't."

He was presently stretched out, face downward, on a marble slab waiting to be rubbed.

Then that dyspeptic attendant got at him.

First he pounded and thumped and twisted Muldoon's arm.

Then he punched his back, whacked his ribs and twisted his leg.

Then he made the place ring with the slaps he gave his victim.

"Hould on, hould on, don't drive me clean through the slab!"

Whack! Thump! Slap! That was all the answer Muldoon got.

"Tare an' ages, man, do yez think I'm made av wood?"

All the attendant did was to rub Muldoon's back with a brush.

It was more like a currycomb than anything else.

The poor man thought he would be flayed alive.

"Aisy now, aisy. I don't want to be skinned alive."

The fellow only rubbed the harder.

Then Muldoon raised his head, and turned to protest.

He got a lot of soap in his mouth for his pains.

"Ow-ow, be heavens, man, I'm not an achor, I don't ate soap."

Then the flaying process went on just the same.

"Turn over, please," said the attendant, giving the patient a punch in the ribs.

The slab was wet and slippery with soap.

When Muldoon went to flop over he slipped and fell on the floor.

"Oh, glory! Me ribs is broke!" he yelled.

"Turn over, please," said the man with the brush.

"On the flure, is it?" asked Muldoon.

"No, on the slab. I've got to rub your chest."

"Faix, it'll do as 'it is. I don't want to be skinned intirely. Let it go as it is."

"Lie down, please," said the man, calmly.

"Are yez goin' to trow me on the flure again?"

"That's your look out," said the torturer.

Muldoon stretched himself out, and the man scrubbed.

He got the soap as much in Muldoon's nose, eyes and mouth as anywhere else.

The unfortunate man could not say anything, for then he'd get more soap in his mug.

"Sit up, please," said the man, at last, when Muldoon began to think that he must be pretty well peeled.

Then he soaped his victim's head, and poor Muldoon thought he would be scalped.

"Hould an, hould an, bad luck to yez! Lave a little hair an me head, can't yez? I don't want to buy a wig just yet."

"Take the shower, please," said the attendant, yanking Muldoon to his feet and shoving him under the shower.

It was supposed to be of a medium heat. As a matter of fact it was nearly boiling.

"Oh, begorry, I don't want to be scalded!" yelled Muldoon.

He jumped away and made a crack at the attendant.

All he hit, however, was the marble partition.

"Water warm enough, sir?" asked the polite attendant, whom Muldoon had failed to paralyze.

"Warm enough? Faix, it wor biling. Do ye take me for a salamander?"

"Oh! I'll make it cooler then."

He did for a fact.

When Muldoon stepped under the shower again it was nearly freezing.

He jumped out so quick that he sat down.

"I didn't tell yez to give me ice wather, ye haythen," he sputtered. "Can't yez shtrike a mejium?"

The next time it was just right and Muldoon stood under it and proceeded to cool off.

"I say, pop, aren't you ready for the plunge yet?" called out Roger from the next room.

"Is that you, Roger?"

"Yes."

"How are yez?"

"First rate."

"Ye're not skinned?"

"No."

"Nor scalded?"

"Of course not."

"Nor frozen?"

"No—no, I'm all right."

"I'm not, thin. I'm afeard yez won't know me when I come out."

"Oh, yes, I will. Come on and take a plunge."

Muldoon came out, dove into the tank, swam around once and came out shivering.

Then that fiend of an attendant got at him again.

He had a towel, with which he proceeded to dry his victim.

It was like a piece of hair-cloth.

"Here, cheese that!" yelled Muldoon. "Give me a dacint tow'l and I'll dhry myself."

The man was only obeying instructions and you couldn't blame him.

However, he went a little more gently. Then Roger and Muldoon went into a room and lay down on a couple of lounges, being well wrapped up in big sheets. Muldoon fell asleep and stayed so for nearly an hour.

When he awoke he saw nothing of Roger.

"Where's me son?" he asked of the demon attendant, who now appeared.

"Dressing, sir. Do you want to be rubbed dry, sir?"

"No, I do not. I've had all the rubbing I want, be heavens. Get out av me way."

Then he went to the room where he had undressed.

There wasn't a sign of any article of wearing apparel in it, however.

"Faix, I've med a mistake, it's the next one."

He pushed aside the curtain of the next room and immediately a man called out:

"Here, here, keep out of that room. That's mine."

"Excuse me, I wor lookin' for me clothes."

"Well, they ain't in there," said the man, approaching. "Those are all mine."

"You're sixty-seven," said the attendant.

"Ye're a liar! I am not fifty-seven yet. What do ye know about me age, ye great gawk?"

"Room sixty-seven—the next one."

"Faix, I was there just now and there's nothing in it."

"Oh, but there must be."

"Yez are right, there's got to be, but there's nothing all the same."

"Make that tarrier shut up!" roared some one. "I want to go to sleep."

"If anny mon calls me a terrier, I'll pulverize him," sputtered Muldoon. "Who's got me clothes?"

"Can't you remember where you put them?"

"I pit them in here, faix. Hallo, Roger! Where are yez?"

"What is it, pop?" and the young fellow appeared, all dressed and ready to go out.

"Some sassench has shtole me clothes."

"Nonsense!"

"I say it's not. How am I to get home widout me wearing apparel?"

"You might be sent by telegraph, I suppose, pop," said Roger.

"Ah, go an, quit yer jokin'. Where are me clothes?"

"I haven't got 'em, pop. Where did you put 'em?"

"In here."

"Well, why don't you put them on and come home?"

"Because they're not in there, that's the reason."

"Absurd!"

"Then look for yersilf."

"Is that Mick never going to shut up?" growled the man who wanted to go to sleep.

"Yez had ought to be shut up yersilf in a lunatic asylum!" retorted Muldoon.

"Where are me clothes?"

Nobody knew, but all hands had something to suggest.

"Perhaps you came without 'em?"

"Did you look in the wash?"

"Are you sure you ever had any?"

"Maybe they're up the spout."

"Give that Turk his duds and chase him out of here. I want to go to sleep."

"Be heavens, I'll pulverize that sucker nixt," said Muldoon. "I'm nayther a Tarrier, a Mick or a Turk, I'll have yez know."

"Shut up, you rattle-headed Greek. You've lost your buttons."

"Faix, I know I have, and me pants, too, and that's the worst of it."

"Wait here, pop," said Roger, "and I'll go up home and send you something to wear."

"Phwat's the matter wid telephoning and havin' Nibbsey bring them?"

"Well, you might do that, I suppose, and I'll go too."

"Faix, thin I'll have two suits."

"Well, isn't that better than none, pop?"

"It is, faix, but—whisper now, Roger, is this wan av yer thricks?"

"What's that, pop?"

"Phwat have yez done wid me clothes?"

"I haven't done anything with 'em, pop. I haven't had 'em."

"But you know where they are?"

"Nixey!"

"It's very strange. Maybe they're here, afther all."

All this time Muldoon was walking around wrapped in a sheet—a suitable costume enough for where he was, but hardly the thing for the street.

Four or five attendants came and tried to hunt up the missing garments.

They could not be found, and meanwhile Roger had departed.

It was quite evident that some one had walked off with the missing garments.

They were in none of the other rooms, and no one appeared to know a thing about them.

At any rate, they could not be found, and time was pressing.

"Have yez a telephone," asked Muldoon, "so I can sind word to my wife?"

"Certainly."

"Then ring her up."

They soon got Mrs. Muldoon to the phone and the following conversation ensued:

"Hallo!"

"Hallo yourself, and bad manners to ye."

"Hold on, Bedalia, it's me."

"And who are ye, I'd like to know?"

"Muldoon, av coorse."

"Go on, ye're not. Muldoon is here this minute."

"He is! Faix, thin, I must be a bird to be in two places at wanst."

"Ye're not a bird at all, but a donkey. I don't know ye and I'll sind me husband down and he'll paralyze ye."

"Faix, I've not got the right wan at all," said Muldoon. "Phwat number did yez ring up?"

The clerk at the desk repeated the number.

"That's right enough, but, hallo, Cintral, yez didn't—"

"Yes, Kitty and me went to the party last night, and—hallo!"

"For why have yez turned me off, Cintral? I warn't through yet."

"Well, you don't expect to keep the wires all day, do you?" came over the box in a piping voice.

"I do not, but I don't want to be cut short in the middle of a word be—"

"What number? Oh, all right. Yes, Kitty and me went to the party. It was just boss. We met them two Nineteen street fellers, and—"

"Ah, go an, shoot the fellers and the party and Kitty and give me me wife."

"I haven't got your wife, you horrid thing! I'll report you if—"

Ting-ting-tingaling!

This time Muldoon got his wife, or thought he did.

"Hallo, Bedalia! Sind me down a suit av clothes r ght away be the bye, to the Turkish—"

"Yis, I will—not. What wud I sind ye a suit-of clothes for?"

"To wear, av coorse."

"Thin go buy some. I ain't bitin' at that hook, me foine bunco sharp."

"But it's me, be heavens, Terry Muldoon, yer own husband, that's—"

"Go tell that to some wan else. Yez can't fool me. Good-bye!"

Then the wire was switched off and Muldoon couldn't get it again.

"Begob, Bedalia must be crazy," he muttered, "to take me for a bunco man. She must have known me v'ice. I'll try the flats and see if I can get thim."

He rang up the flats and got them, Nibbsey being at the box.

"Hallo! Is this Muldoon's flats?"

"Yer bet yer life it is. Is that you, boss?"

"Yis. Go to the house and tell the coachman to bring me down some clothes. I've been robbed."

"Well, I take me oat! Say, boss, do you want ter hear dat new song and—"

"I do not! Do yez want to smash the tullyphone? Go an and do as I tell yez."

"All right, boss. Good-bye!"

Five minutes afterward a messenger boy came in with a box.

"Is der a Mick here by der name o' Muldoon?" he asked.

"I'll harsewhip ye if ye call me a Mick!"

"Den go change yer face."

Muldoon took the box which was addressed to him, and proceeded to open it.

Inside was a suit of his clothes, with shirt, underwear and socks to match.

Moreover, it was the identical suit which he had worn when he entered the bathing establishment.

It took him just ten seconds to tumble to this fact.

"Begob, it's the same old suit," he muttered. "I'll bet tin dollars to a bad quarter that Roger put up the job an me."

Then all hands present laughed and the clerk said:

"Shall I telephone for a basket, Mr. Muldoon?"

"No, begob!" said Muldoon, as he walked away with his clothes on his arm. "Yez can ordher a coffin instead, for that son av his mother's will want it whin I see him again, be heavens."

One day, soon after this, Mrs. Finnegan went to washing and intended to use the roof of the flat as a drying ground.

It was really not her day, but the day previous had been inclement and she had been obliged to postpone putting out the clothes.

She never stopped to think that it might be somebody else's day to use the roof.

She wanted it and that was quite sufficient. This is a free country and everybody can do as they like, provided they don't interfere with you.

Mrs. Finnegan was an advocate of equal rights, so far as she herself was concerned.

She got at her washing early as soon as Finnegan and the boys had gone.

Mary Jane was too high-toned to wash clothes.

While her mother was hustling soiled linen through a ringing machine she was playing on the piano and singing "Stick to your mother, Tom."

Now it so happened that this day belonged to the signora on the third flat.

She went to her wash tubs, never dreaming that any disturbance was in the air.

As she pounded the jumpers, wrung the socks, juggled the shirts, and banged the sheets, she sang the songs of her sunny clime and felt as gay as one of her own neckerchiefs.

Overhead she could hear Madame Finnegan at work, never thinking for an instant that it was the same as her own.

At last she had a big basketful of clothes ready to hang out on the wire lines on the roof.

Balancing the same on her head, she ascended to the aerial promenade in the best of spirits.

When she stepped out of the covered stairway upon the roof, she found Mrs. Finnegan in possession of the field.

The lady from Ireland had already hung up several pairs of stockings, assorted sizes, an apron or two and a skirt, and was now, with her mouth full of clothespins, about to expose a sheet to the winds of heaven.

The signora was greatly astonished, and setting down her basket, she asked:

"What makea you herea thisa day? Thisa my day."

"Go an, it's mine," said Finnegan, tossing her head.

"Noa, disa my day, youra day yestera-day; you no washa den, you waita nothera week."

"Faix, I will not. It's my day, and I'm going to hang out me clothes."

"Noa, you no hanga out. Me wanta de linea, you takea de line to-morrow day, disa day belonga to me."

"Begob, I'll hang me wash out any day I like and won't ax l'ave from anny Dagoes."

"You go hanga youraself on a line, me nev' say nothing, Irisha loaf' no gooda."

"I'm as good as ye, Macaroni, and better, too. How cud I put out me wash yesterday whin it was rainin'? Yez'll hov to wait till I get troo, and that settles it. Dhry yer ould duds in the kitchen or get a pully line put up. Anythin's good enough for the likes—"

"Go usea de kitch' youraself, go get a de pull-line fora you? Disa my day, I tella you."

"Go an, ye swill grubber, it's my day if I like," and Mrs. Finnegan proceeded to hang up the sheet.

"Takea down, disa my day. Irisha-woman wanta de earth, wanta ev'ting,

gotta de cheek like de horse, tinka own alla de ceet, walka ov' ev'bod' alla same biga man. You takea down sheet, me pulla down."

"Yes, ye will!" screamed Mrs. Finnegan, getting red in the face. "L'ave go av that sheet, you dirty Italian."

The signora had hold of one end of the sheet and Madame Finnegan had the other.

"Me no wanta sheeta, too mucha dirt, no gooda for pig sleepa on, takea 'way, me no want, no gooda."

"It's as good as annything ye hov in yer ould basket, ye stale beer dhrinkin' ould butt grubbin', macaroni 'atin Italian," sputtered Finnegan, yanking away the sheet.

"Bah! Irisha loaf' eata de corna beef, de rot' cabbage, de piga foot, sleepa wid de pig, drinka de whisk', alla de time fight, makea de noise."

"Troth, there's furriners enough over here widout getting in a lot av greasy Italians," growled Finnegan, the wet sheet in her hand.

"Irishaman wanta take evrating, takea de washa day, takea de coal, usea de wat', tinka everabod' waita fora him. Irisha-woman skipa de gutt', takea de washa downa-stairs; disa my day, me gota wash, me hanga up; Irisha loaf' waita some othera day."

Then Mrs. Piscatelli, took a sheet from her basket with the intention of hanging it up.

The Finnegan was not going to back down now for any one.

She did not care whose drying day it was, so long as it suited her to have it.

"Don't ye dar' to hang up that dirty sheet," she yelled. "Yez can wait till I get troo."

"Me hanga de sheet, hanga de sock, hanga de trous', hanga everating. You saya de word, me knocka you nose. Me knowa whata right, me knowa de law."

"Yis, you do, Dago."

"Bah, flannela mouthal!"

"It's my day."

"You tella de lie."

"G'on off de roof."

"You go youraself."

Both stood glaring at each other, each waiting for the other to make a move.

Finnegan wasn't going to back down, but she was waiting for Piscatelli to make a move which would give her an excuse for slugging the Italian.

The signora talked very loud, very fast and very excitedly, waving one hand about like a wing and holding on to a sheet with the other.

Neither wanted to strike the first blow, if it came to that, and yet neither was willing to give in.

The signora knew she was in the right, and wouldn't give up, while Madame Finnegan knew she was in the wrong but was bound to bluff her rival down, if possible.

There they stood, three or four feet apart, blustering and gesticulating.

One was afraid, and the other didn't dare, and that was about the size of it.

At this juncture Muldoon appeared upon the scene.

He had come up to see the Dutchwoman about something, and heard loud talking on the roof.

Listening a few moments, he perceived that a fine row was in progress.

"Be heavens, that's something I'll not allow!" he muttered. "I'll have a quite house av I discharge iverybody in it!"

Then up he went to the roof, and stepped out just as the two women were glaring at each other like two cats on a back fence, each waiting for the other to make the attack.

"Ladies, ladies! I can't have this—positively I can't," he said, mildly, stepping between them and putting out his hands. "Let us have peace and quiteness."

"She takea my day, tella me wait, gotta de cheek!"

"The Italian hussy blackguarded me, so she did, and I'll not—"

"She no own a de house, she no bossa de wholea flat, she—"

"An Irishman is as good as three dirty Dagoes anny day in—"

"Now, ladies, do be quite and let me settle yer dishpute widout any throuble. I want to kape a respectable apartment house, ladies, and—"

"Thin turn out the I-talians!"

"Firea outa Irisha loaf! den you havea gooda—"

"Now, ladies, do let us have peace and come to an undherstanding," continued Muldoon, while the two women were glaring and shaking fists at one another and spoiling for a first class fight.

"Faix, how could I do me washing yisterday, when it poured torrents?"

"Data no my faulta, me no makea de rain."

"Now, ladies, ladies—"

"She can wait just as well as not and I can't."

"Me no can waita, Miss' Shoemake she washa to-morr', Frencha lady washa nexa day, no can—"

"Now, ladies, av yez please, do be quite a moment and listen to me," said Muldoon. "Why can't yez both use the roof, Mrs. Finnegan wan side and Mrs. Piscatory the other?"

This did not seem to suit either of the ladies.

They both jabbered and gesticulated and made noise enough to wake the dead.

"For Hiven's sakes, thin, fix it to suit yersilves," cried Muldoon, getting mad and out of patience. "Ye're nuisances, both ov yez, and yer room is better than yer company, be heavens!"

PART III.

IF Muldoon had been wise, he would have let those two angry women settle their little difficulty about the washing among themselves.

It would have been better for him also if he had not got mad, and said that the flats would be better without than with them, or words of similar import.

Neither of the belligerents was over fond of him in the first place.

That remark of his settled his hash then and there.

Each grabbed the sheet she was holding with both hands, and, as if by a preconcerted movement, went for him flat-footed.

Biff!

Swash!

Two wet sheets, deftly twisted and adroitly handled, struck Muldoon with full force right in the face.

Down he went like a shot, his hat sailing away to leeward.

"So we're both nuisances, are we, ye red-mouthed tarrier?"

"You calla me noose, me smasha you, Irisha loaf, me killa you."

Down went Muldoon but up he got again. Those two angry women were ready for him.

They whacked and belted him with those soggy sheets and every blow told.

Nobody could stand up against such an assault and Muldoon dusted.

He fortunately escaped falling into the baskets and made a bee-line for the stairs.

The signora aimed a blow at him with her sheet as he broke away.

The thing whizzed just over his head and took Mrs. Finnegan in the jaw.

Then there was war in earnest.

The Irishwoman declared that the Italian had struck her purposely and the latter promptly called the former a liar.

Then they both went at it hammer and tongs.

Muldoon was not in this fight and the original quarrel was taken up.

It was once more a question of the rights of one or the other to use the line that day.

The two sheets flew about, got twisted and tangled and torn, and scooped up all the loose dust on the roof.

Then Madame Finnegan abandoned hers, grabbed up a soggy towel and soaked the signora in the ear with it.

La Piscatelli retorted with a red flannel undershirt all soap and wringing wet.

The Finnegan let fly a skirt and downed the signora.

After that the air was full of flying washing.

Both women yelled and jabbered and talked at the top of their voices.

Muldoon heard the racket and sneaked back to see what it all meant.

He found the two Amazons fighting out their former quarrel for all they were worth.

He had no further desire to pose as a mediator, however.

"Let the two ould cats fight it out bechune thimselves, be heavens!" he remarked. "I tried to make peate wanst and got soaked for me throuble and now let thim settle it to suit thimselves."

By the time each of the belligerents had soiled enough clothes to make her a couple of hours' work, they began to see the foolishness of the whole proceeding.

"Me biga fool, you biga fool, bot' biga fool!" said Mrs. Piscatelli. "Whata for we wanta fight? Irishaman makea alla troub', fighta him, smasha him."

"Begorrah, I think ye're right, Macaroni," said Madam Finnegan. "It's that baste av a landlord we want to fight."

Then they gathered up their soiled clothes, finding that several pieces had flown off the roof and went below.

After that they divided the lines between them and there was no more trouble that day.

Muldoon resolved to fire them both out, but before he could accomplish that he had other things to think of.

On the way down, after leaving the two women, he met Mr. Burns, the poet, in the hall.

"Hallo, Burns!" he said. "Did yez come to see me?"

"No, sir. I am about to leave my domicile for a stroll on the boulevards," said Burns.

"Your domicile, is it? Do ye own the house?"

"The apartments I occupy, would be a more appropriate term, I suppose, my dear friend."

"Are you occupying apartments in the house, Mr. Burns?" asked Muldoon, in astonishment.

"Such is the fact, my old compatriot and friend, and I must admit that in the main the situation of the suite is satisfactory, although there are one or two features which might be vastly improved."

Mr. Burns said all this with an abundance of appropriate Delsartian gestures that fairly paralyzed Muldoon.

"Ye're living in me flats?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"And yez have a whole one?"

"Such is the case."

"And ye don't have just wan small room wid Dan?"

"My requirements are greater than that, my esteemed friend."

"And ye don't like thim?"

"Well, not altogether, my worthy host, but I presume—"

"Thin av yez don't like thim, yez can get out!" howled Muldoon. "Who tould yez to move in here, anny way?"

"My wife seemed pleased with the rooms and also with the fact that she would be—"

"Your wife!" echoed Muldoon.

"Certainly."

"And are ye married?"

"To be sure."

"Well, well, the fools are not all dead yet, it appears. Who wud marry ye, I'd like to know?"

"Mrs. Mamie Guggenheimer, *nee* Fresh. You remember her, of course? She used to board with you and married a widower with six children and—"

"Howly mackerel! and now the Dootchman's dead and ye've marr'ed her, children and all, have yez?"

"The late Guggenheimer left a modest fortune of six hundred and forty-two dollars and a life insurance of four hundred and—"

"And ye thought ye'd betther scoop it. Whisper, Hippocrates, are they all here?"

"The responsibilities, you mean?"

"Yis, the Dootchman's kids."

"One is—"

"Ah, thank Heaven. Well, wan ain't so bad."

"One is out in St. Louis as I was about to remark," resumed Mr. Burns. "The rest will reside with their mother for the present."

This was too much for Muldoon and for a few moments he said nothing.

"Be the way, Burns," he suddenly asked, "yez haven't paid yer rent yet, have yez?"

"No certainly not; I knew there was no hurry about it and so I did not bother you."

"Oh, ye didn't!" said Muldoon, with open eyes and mouth.

"No; I knew that you had plenty to think of besides that."

The coolness of this remark fairly took away our landlord's breath.

"Well," he muttered, at length, "I'll allow ye to throuble me wid it neow. Twinty dollars, Mr. Burns, av yez plase."

"Ah, really, my dear Mul, I'm very sorry you know, but just at the moment I haven't the amount with me, but—by the way, can you lend me fifty dollars for a few days? Then I'll pay the whole thing in a lump."

This was another paralyzer, and so rattled Muldoon that the simple-hearted idiot

was thinking of going home, into the office came the Hon. Mike Growler and Dan.

"Hallo, Mul, old sport," said the statesman. "What's der matter wid goin' out for a walk?"

"I wor just goin' home," said Muldoon.

"Well, dat's all right. I ain't proud, I ain't. I eats wid me knife, and I don't use no napkin, but I ain't ashamed to be seen walkin' with you."

"Maybe not, Mike," said Muldoon, "but I can't say the same as regards ye, me woild Westerner."

"Dat's one on old Blowhard," softly warbled Nibbsey, that red-headed youth being present on this occasion.

"Come on, Terry," said Dan. "It's a

"Climb up after it," said Mr. Growler.

"Indeed and I won't."

"Yer a-scared," said the Hon. Mike. "I'm a daisy old climber, I am, a regular bare-faced monkey, and if dat was my hat you'd see how quick I'd go after it."

"Sure, Terry's gettin' ould and rheumatic, and he knows he can't climb the pole," said Dan.

"Yes, cert'nly, he's an ould stiff legged veteran; he ain't no climber," added Mike. "Bet if dat was my dicer I'd 've had it long before dis. Der Lily of Nevada is a hardy plant and kin climb anything."

"Yis, av coorse yez would," said Dan, slyly. "But me brother is older nor ye,



The two women were glaring at each other like two cats on a back fence, each waiting for the other to make the attack. "Ladies, ladies! I can't have this—positively I can't," said Muldoon mildly, stepping between them and putting out his hands.

gave the poet the money asked without a murmur.

Muldoon left Mr. Burns, and had just reached the street, when he met Edward Geoghegan, a former member of the gang.

Edward was a walking delegate, a political heeler, a colonizer, and a loafer by turns, being sometimes one and sometimes another, according to circumstances.

"How do, Muldoon?" he said. "Know anybody here?"

"Yis," said Muldoon, sadly, "I do."

"So do I. That's funny! Why, no, it ain't! I'm livin' with your brother Dan. I'm his lodger."

"Oh, you are?"

"Yes. Come and see me some time."

"Oh, yes, I will," muttered Muldoon, as he went away.

"So, so, me brother Dan not only pays me no rint," he mused, "but he takes lodgers besides. I'll bet that Edward Geoghegan doesn't get his room widout payin' for it, be heavens!"

"That makes wan more av the gang, and faix I'll bet they'll all be there before I know it. I must fill up thim impty flats before anny more av thim get in."

Along in the afternoon, when Muldoon

long toime since we tree tuck a walk to-gither."

"If de boss goes wid dem two blokes dere'll be trouble," remarked Nibbsey to himself.

Muldoon allowed himself to be persuaded and off went the three graces, Nibbsey being left in charge of the office.

"If de boss don't go home paralyzed or get roped into some snide game it'll be 'cause luck is dead on his side," observed the boy, as he watched the three go down the street.

The three sports were soon out of sight, stopping in at a refreshment parlor to lubricate their throats at Muldoon's expense. A little later the Hon. Mike invited the others to take a glass of water with him and so it went.

It was a windy day and after stopping in at several refectories to escape the gale, they started down the avenue arm in arm.

Presently a gust of wind took Muldoon's hat and carried it up in the air in a twinkling.

It caught among a lot of telegraph wires close alongside a pole supporting the same.

"Luck at that neow," said Muldoon.

"How'm I goin' to get me hat?"

and he's gettin' fable. His spoortin' blood runs could these days."

"Ah, he never had none, Mul didn't," snorted Mike. "He couldn't never climb, he couldn't."

These remarks were not at all pleasing to Muldoon.

"Yez are a couple av dom falsifiers," he asserted, boldly. "I can bate the two av yez climbin', and I always cud."

"In yer mind," said Mike.

"Ye moight have wanst," said Dan, "but ye must remember that yere gettin' ould."

"Ould nothin'! I'll bet yez tin dollars I'll go up the pole like a monkey."

"Well, yer look like one," said Mike.

"Niver moind anny reflections on me personal appearance, Mither Growler," said Muldoon. "Yer own face would kill trees. Do yez take me wager or not?"

"Yer can't do it," said Mike, who was great on the bluff.

"I'll show yez that I can, be heavens!" retorted Muldoon, and off came his coat.

Throwing it on the pavement he tackled that pole and began to shin up it quite lively.

It is quite possible that at another time

he would not have attempted it, but now he was mad, and he also had just enough seltzer aboard to make him reckless.

Mike knew enough not to bet against Muldoon, for he knew that he would lose, but he said just enough to make his brother-in-law attempt the feat and put himself on exhibition.

Muldoon had climbed about six feet and was beginning to puff, when a crowd began to collect.

The spectacle of a bald-headed man climbing a telegraph pole without the aid of clamps was enough to draw a crowd anywhere.

Up went Muldoon, and every inch he gained seemed to add to the crowd below.

Pretty soon up came two policemen, seeing the crowd.

"Here, here, what's this?" asked one.

"Man tryin' to steal a ride on de elevator."

"Dat's de scared baboon wot's escaped from de circus."

"Here, here, get away out of this. Go home and don't be making a crowd."

"Go on now the whole of ye, or ye'll get clubbed on the head."

Some of the crowd thinned out, but a good many remained.

The Hon. Mike Growler and Dan Muldoon were not among the last to leave by any means.

"Go on, now, and don't draw a crowd again," said the big cop, beginning to crawl.

"Draw a crowd! Why, I had only just come when you grabbed me, you great gawk."

"Go on now, don't give me any more lip, or I will haul you in."

"Well, why don't you?" said the midget.

"Go on if you're going to. I'd just like to take your number at the same time."

"Let's see, nineteen hundred and what? Don't take your hat off."

"Here you, come down off that pole!" yelled the copper, abruptly withdrawing his attention from the bumptious little man and giving it entirely to Muldoon.



Each grabbed the sheet she was holding with both hands, and, as if by a preconcerted movement, went for him flat-footed. Biff! Swash! Two wet sheets, deftly twisted and adroitly handled, struck Muldoon with full force right in the face.

"Have the money ready for me when I get down," he cried, "for I'll win it, niver fear."

"Look at de baboon goin' up de pole!" shouted a small boy.

"Say, dere's no ball game goin' on, is dey?"

"Ah, dat's de new fake of de nigger and de cocoanut, life size."

"Somebody paint de pole, an' den he'll get fixed comin' down."

"Bet yer he don't get half way up."

"Ah, go on; he's a purfesh, he is. Look at de way he goes up."

Muldoon was not to be bluffed or ridiculed out of giving up the task now that he had attempted it.

He was sweating and puffing and had splinters in his hands, but he was game for all that.

The cold, blustering winds of March toyed with the scattered locks upon his semi-bald pate and whistled through his sluggers, but he wasn't going to give up for trifles like that.

"If the pole wor twice as long I'd climb it now, be heavens!" he grunted, as he pressed knees, heels and elbows tight against the stick.

They would like to have seen the show out but they knew when to be discreet.

Therefore they skipped to a quiet resort where they could witness the denouement and yet not be in it.

Having chased away a portion of the crowd, the two coppers now turned their attention to the cause of the same.

"Here, you, come down here; you can't climb that pole!"

"Yer a liar, I can!" shouted back Muldoon, not knowing who had spoken.

"Go home out of this, all of you!" cried the larger of the two coppers, grabbing the smallest man in the crowd and shaking him.

"Go on home, now, and don't be drawing a crowd, or you'll get run in."

"Do you know who you are shaking, sir," sputtered the little man, making twice as much fuss as a big one would have made.

"Don't you give me any back talk now, or I'll run you in anyhow," bluffed the copper.

"I'd just like to have you do it, you big ruffian; I'd just like to make a complaint against you. Go on, take me to the station, I wish you would."

For a time the little man attracted more attention than Muldoon did.

The latter had been doing his very best to reach the cross-trees, where his hat still reposed among the mass of wires.

He had had an opportunity to rest once or twice, attention being diverted from him, and he now renewed his efforts, with a fresh accumulation of breath and strength.

"Here, here! come down out fo that!"

"Yis, I will, when I get good and ready. Yez think I'm goin' to give up, don't yez?"

Well, I'm not; and don't yez forget it."

One good spurt took him to the cross-piece, and he hauled himself astride it.

At that very instant, however, those playful March winds caught the coveted dicer, whisked it out of its nest among the wires and sent it flying high up in the air.

"Just me luck!" muttered Muldoon, in disgust. "I'll bet it wor Mike Growler phwat blowed it off the wires. He's a champion wind-bag, he is."

Up went the hat, and then down, and then across the street, over tin roofs, against chimneys, bobbing up and down on skylights, and, at last, disappearing in the distance.

"Wor there iver such luck?" asked Muldoon.

"Well, the bet's off, I suppose."

Annyhow, I climbed up afther it and Mike Growler said I cudn't. I've won the tin dollars at all ivents."

"Are you coming down off of that pole, or are you?" yelled the copper.

Muldoon looked down, saw the officer, and retorted:

"Yis, av coorse I'm coming down. Do ye think this is where I live?"

"Well, you'd better."

"So I will—whin I get ready."

"Come down now, I tell you," bawled the man.

"And suppose I don't, what then?" asked Muldoon, who could afford to be impudent in that position of vantage.

"Then I'll come up after you, that's what."

Muldoon looked down, took in the man's proportions and laughed.

"Yez have too much stomach," he chuckled. "Yez cudn't reach around the pole to save yez."

The crowd laughed and that made the fat copper mad.

He cuffed the ears of the smallest boy in the gang and then bawled:

"Are you coming down?"

"Yis."

"H'm! I thought so."

"Whin it suits me convanience. I'm very comfortable up here, only for wantin' me coat. I say, Dan, bring it up to me, will yez, or let Mike do it? He's such a great climber, he can do it aisy."

Neither Mike nor Dan heard these remarks, however, and Muldoon could not see the men addressed in the crowd below.

It was getting somewhat cold up there in the wind for Muldoon, without either hat or coat, but he wasn't going to be ordered down by anybody and would stay up there all night rather than appear to come down at any one's bidding.

"Are you coming down?" yelled the cop.

"I am not."

"Then I'll make you."

"I'd like to see ye do it."

"Come down or I'll shoot you down."

"Go sit an ice and cool off."

The crowd laughed again and the copper did not like it.

He and his mate dispersed a big part of the crowd and then he bawled to Muldoon:

"Now then, are you coming down as I told you?"

"No, I'm not."

"Then stay up there, you pig-headed tarrier, and freeze."

"I'll not do it, be heavens!" said Muldoon. "I'll not do annything for anny common polis'man."

With that, Muldoon threw his leg off the cross-piece, hugged the pole and began sliding down.

PART IV.

DOWN the telegraph pole slid Muldoon while the crowd looked on in delight.

The two coppers were waiting for him at the bottom.

They were not going to be called names for nothing.

Meanwhile, even as Muldoon was sliding down, along came a bill-poster.

He proceeded to plaster the lower part of that pole with paste, previous to sticking a bill thereon.

Of course he did not look up, his business concerning the base of the pole and not the top.

He was just about to slap a brushful of paste on that part of the pole, when down came Muldoon.

That bill-poster was knocked endwise in a jiffy.

Muldoon's legs clasped his neck, and the base of Muldoon's spine was on his head.

His hat was smashed, and down he went all in a heap.

Muldoon went with him, and both were tangled up on the pavement.

Moreover, Muldoon got a fine coat of paste on his legs and on his waistcoat.

"Wot yer doin'? Who hit me?" yelled the poster.

Then up rushed the two policemen to take in Muldoon.

They could not tell which was Muldoon, and which was the sticker of bills, the way the two were mixed up.

As it happened, however, they both seized the bill-sticker, one by the leg and the other by the arm, and proceeded to straighten things out.

There was considerable danger of their pulling the man in two between them, but that did not matter.

The result of the tussle was that they tore the man's coat off his back in the straightening process.

At the same time they gave Muldoon a chance to extricate himself and get up.

The two bluecoats yanked the other man on his feet, and then Muldoon tumbled to the situation.

"I see no raison why I shud be incarcerated in the pin simply becos av me hat goin' up in the sky and gettin' intangled among the telegraph wires," he remarked to himself.

Then he dusted out while the coppers and the bill-poster were having an argument over the affair.

The fate of the paste juggler does not particularly interest us and I will merely say in skipping on to something else, that he finally convinced the two guardians of the peace that he had done nothing for which he could be arrested.

"Faix, I wondher phwere Mike and Dan can be at all?" muttered Muldoon, as he hurried away. "I don't see anything av thim. Maybe they've skipped out to avoid paying that bet."

They had skipped, although not very far away, but they did not see Muldoon any more than he saw them.

They had waited till his hat flew out of its nest of wires and then they had lighted out.

Muldoon, meantime, began to sneeze and to realize that going bareheaded in March was no picnic.

"Troth, I must buy me a hat," he muttered, when well clear of the coppers. "I can't go home this way. It attracts too much attention, and is not bineficient to the health aither."

He soon found a hat store, walked in and asked to be fitted to a hat.

"You'll want a coat too, won't you?" asked the proprietor.

"Faix, I never thot av that," said Muldoon. "It's no wondher I wor sneezin' so hard. Now phwat the mischief did thim two tarriers do wid me coat? Faix, I believe all me money wor in it."

"Do you live far from here?" asked the hatter. "You might send after it."

Muldoon went down into his waistcoat pocket and fished up a wad of bills.

"I've enough to buy a hat wid," he remarked, "and maybe I can foind me coat. Show me some silk dicers, av yez please."

Muldoon's watch-chain, seals, ring and diamond scarf-stud convinced the dealer in head-gear that his customer was a man of means, even if he were a bit eccentric.

He therefore trotted out his hats, and Muldoon was speedily fitted.

"Shall I send it around?" the dealer asked, from force of habit.

"And hav' me go bareheaded?" asked Muldoon. "No, thanks. I'll take it wid me."

"There's a clothing store next door but three. Hadn't you better get a coat? It's quite sharp out."

"Maybe I had," said Muldoon, "av I've got money enough. I'll see whin I go in."

He did not like the looks of the clothing emporium when he reached it, however.

Moreover, he saw the Hon. Mike and Dan enter a gilded hall where spirituous refreshment is dispensed, just a few yards ahead of him, at the same time.

"There they are now," he muttered, as he quickened his pace, "and Dan has me coat."

He entered the place just behind his friends, and saw them sitting at a table in a corner.

"Yez are two foine suckers, so y' are," he said, as he joined them. "For why did yez run away from me like that?"

"Run not'n. Who run? We stayed, didn't we, Dan?"

"Av coorse we did, and thim we lost ye in the crowd."

"I believe ye're lyin', so I do," said Muldoon. "I'll throuble yez for me coat, Dan, and also to pay me the tin dollars that ye bet that I cudn't climb up the pole and get me hat."

"Did I bet ye tin dollars that ye cudn't do it?"

"Yes, yez did, and so did Mike," returned Muldoon, putting on his coat.

"Well, I know I did," said the Hon. Mike, shoving out his lip. "I ain't no kicker. See? I'm square as a house, I am, and when I say anything it goes. Der Lily of Nevada never goes back on herself, you bet yer sweet life."

"I'm glad to see yez hov reformed, Mike," said Muldoon. "Pass over the tin cases."

"What fur?"

"The size av yer bet."

"I ain't lost nothin'."

"For why haven't yez?"

"Cause I h'ain't."

"Didn't yez bet?"

"Cert'nly I did."

"Thin pony up."

"But I ain't lost."

"How d'yez make thot eout?"

"What was yer ter do, hey?"

"Climb after me hat."

"And yer done it?"

"To be sure I did."

"Yes, yer did, a fat lot."

"But I say I did."

"Yer was ter get yer hat, wasn't yer?"

"No, sor. I wor to climb afther it."

"And fetch it down. See?"

"Well, didn't I do it?"

"Naw, yer didn't."

"Hovn't I the hat on me head now?"

"Naw! Yer hat got blowed away."

"I know thot, and I wint afther it."

"Yez have lost, Mike," said Dan.

"Der doose I have!"

"Av coorse."

"Yis, and so have ye," said Muldoon.

Then the Hon. Mike spoke up again:

"Dat ain't dersame dicer at all."

"Oh, begorra, so it isn't," said Dan.

That let him out as well as Mike.

"Who says it ain't my hat?" asked Muldoon. "Yez owe me tin dollars, the two av yez."

"Nixey, we don't," said Mike, suddenly whisking the hat from Muldoon's head.

"Look a' dat, yer gay old story writer. Dere's de ticket stickin' to it yet. Yer paid t'ree dollars and fifty cents fur der dicer, yer did."

Sure enough, Muldoon had left the price ticket sticking in the band at the back, and Mike had got onto it, though not at first.

"Bad luck to that careless son av a boy constrictor!" growled Muldoon. "I'll niver pathronize 'um again, be heavens!"

"Dat makes ten cases yer owe me and Dan," said Mr. Growler. "Yer a gay old sportin' man, ain't yer?"

"The bet is off," said Muldoon. "Nothin' was mintioned about bringin' it down, and the wind wor not put in the agree-mint."

"Order a couple o' small bottles, and we'll call it hunk," said Mike.

"Indeed thin, I won't!" said Muldoon, and he did not, and when Nibsey let him into the house half an hour afterwards, that festive youth remarked to himself:

"Well, de boss ain't full, after all, I take me oat!"

St. Patrick's Day was now approaching, and Muldoon resolved to celebrate it with fitting ceremonies.

He had lately been chosen president of an Irish society, on account of the money he would naturally give for such an honor, and all hands told him what a great man he was.

As the great day approached, the members of the lodge all began to suggest that they should take part in the parade.

"It will be a great success," said one, "and ye, with yer pollytickle pull, can secure the first place in the line for uz."

"There'll none av the other ordhers be in it whin they see ye on yer foine harse headin' yer min," said another.

"Ye're sure to hov yer name mintioned in the papers, and maybe it'll lead to yer bein' governor av the State."

"Yez can be mayor, annyhow, and all through the foine appearance ye make on parade, me dear sor."

Muldoon consented but was wise enough to suggest that one hundred new members be initiated at two dollars a head as soon as possible.

"It costs money to jine a parade," he

said, "and the more show yez can make the better for ye, me boys."

No one objected to this, and seventy-five new members were put through a course of sprouts, although they did not all pony up with their ante.

Muldoon saw the grand marshal and had himself and men assigned a prominent place in the line.

Then he went to a livery stable and hired a fine-blooded horse to ride on the grand occasion.

Roger heard about the intended parade of the lodge and of course had to put in his finger.

Nothing that his father was interested in could be allowed to pass unnoticed by that young man.

He was always getting up some snap or another and this affair seemed to promise so much fun that he could not resist having something to do with it.

"Pop will get up a parade without consulting me about it, will he?" he chuckled. "All right, then. I'll fix him and don't you lose sight of that."

The seventeenth came at last, bright and smiling and just cold enough for comfort, the very sort of day that makes every tarrier's heart swell with pride when he sees it.

"The fairies are good to the Irish as usual," said Muldoon, when he looked out and saw what a lovely day it was. "Be heavens, Bedalia, this'll be a proud day for yer own Terrence."

"I believe ye, Terry," said the worthy man's wife. "Will the parade pass be this house?"

"Indeed, it will, me jool, and be sure that yez have out all the Irish flags yez can scrape up. Yez might pit out wan or two little American wans too, not too conspicuously, yez understand, but just so they'll be noticed. We can afford to give the Yanks some little show on so grand an occasion, yez knows."

"But I thot yez wor a good American, Terry?"

"So I am, but I'm a betther Irishman, be heavens, and this day, av all days, wor made for Ireland and the Irish."

Muldoon's cohorts were to join the line at about Thirtieth street, and the great man, clad in full regalia, went straightway, at an early hour, to the livery stable to procure his fiery, untamed steed.

It was here that the first surprise of the day awaited him.

Roger had arisen early, as usual, and had got in ahead of his fond parent.

"Bring forth the horse!" said Muldoon, in melodramatic tones, upon reaching the stable.

The horse was brought out.

It was not the magnificent creature it was cracked up to be.

In fact, some jugglery had taken place before Muldoon's arrival.

You might, by a great stretch of courtesy, call the brute a horse, but it took a good deal of imagination to do it.

It was raw-boned, lop-eared, blind in one eye, and had evidently graduated from the car-stables after completing a full course of training.

"Here's the animal, Mr. Muldoon," said the stableman, leading out the wreck.

"Do yez call that thing a horse?" demanded Muldoon, indignantly, when the wretched creature appeared.

"Cert'nly. Yer didn't think it was a mule, did yer?"

"No, I thot it wor an animated pile av bones. Take it away. I'll not ride anny such monstrosity as that, be heavens."

"Yer don't want it?"

"No. Fetch out the wan I hoired the other day."

"This is the one, sir," said the man with consummate nerve.

"Ye're a dom liar, it's not," retorted Muldoon, hotly. "D'yez think I'm such a big jackass as to pay out money for a thing like that?"

"Dat hoss are got a record, if anybody asts yer. He's a thoroughbred."

"I don't want him, whatever he is. Bring me the wan I hoired."

At that moment out came the boss of the stable.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I want the horse I spoke for the day before yesterday."

"Well, here he is."

"No, it's not."

"I say it is."

"Prove it."

"I'll get the book. Here it is, Alexander, to Mr. Mulready."

"So that's Alexandher, is it?"

"Sure."

"Yare, dat's Aleck," said the helper.

"Well, he may be Alexandher, but I'm not Mulready, all the same."

"Yes, you are; I remember you perfectly."

"Thin yer mimory must be away aff color, be heavens! for I am not an' niver wor an' niver intind to be Mulready. Me name is Muldoon, av annybody asks yez, an' ye know it."

"What! are you Mr. Muldoon?"

"I'm no wan ilse, faix."

"Oh, yes, to be sure. Joe, bring out Dandy Dan. That's the horse Mr. Muldoon hired."

"Dandy Dan ain't in der shop, sir; he's gone."

"Who's got him?"

"Mr. Muldoon."

"But this is Mr. Muldoon," and the boss and the man winked their other eyes.

"He ain't the Muldoon what's got der horse, anyhow. Dat one wasn't old."

"Who says I'm old?" blustered Terrence. "I'm in the proime av loife."

"Well, der oder man said hee's name was Muldoon, and he wanted Dandy Dan, and I squinted at der book and give it to him. See?"

"What sort av a looking man wor he? I'll bet a dollar it wor me son Roger."

"Ah, he was a good-looking feller, not an old jay."

"Naither am I an old jay, and if ye're too flip I'll break yer jaw. Fetch me out a dacint harse, and take this wan back and kill um."

"That's the only saddle horse left, Mr. Muldoon," said the boss.

"Thin bring me a coach harse."

"All out."

"Well, bring me anything but this wan."

"All there is, sir."

"Thin I'll go ilsewhere. This ain't the only livery stable in the city, be heavens!"

"You won't get anything now, no matter where you go."

"I guess I will, av I put up the money for it."

"Money won't count now."

"And for why won't it?"

"Because everything is let out. I could have hired fifty more horses if I'd had 'em. I saved this one for you, 'cause you'd hired it."

"I ped for a horse, not a bag o' bones."

"Well, I'm very sorry there was a mistake made, but this is all there is."

"I'll not have um. Have yez a tillyphone?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll inquire elsewhere."

He rang up half a dozen stables and got the same answer from the whole of 'em.

There were no more horses to be had for love or money.

"Well, I'll take Alexandher," he said.

"Afther all, it's me the people will be luckin' at and not the horse, and there's no time to lose."

Then he got upon the gallant steed's back and rode off.

He looked fine in his big hat and plumes, white gloves and stunning regalia, and anybody might well be proud of him.

That big, bony horse was in striking contrast to his elegant appearance, but after all, as he himself had so justly remarked, it was he whom the people would want to see and not the nag.

As he rode off at a gallop, the small boys of the neighborhood all had something to say about him.

"Oh, I say, Petey, look at de big gorilla on de horse!"

"Dat ain't a truly horse; it's on'y a wooden one!"

"Three shots fur five cents, fellers! Yer get anoder shot if yer knock his hat off!"

"Hey! look at de soger all by himself! Guess he got lost!"

"Parade's comin', fellers! Here's de gen'ral on his mule!"

"Don't he look bully? Just out o' de museum!"

"Go an, go an, ye young vilyans!" said Muldoon. "Sure, it's on parade I am!"

The young villains continued to make remarks, however, and followed Muldoon for several blocks.

"Say, when yer goin' ter shoot de horse?" "If dat thing falls down I'll get yer a saw horse."

"Dat's cruelty to animals, and yer'll get arrested."

"Ain't yer 'fraid ter carry dat cheese knife? Yer might cut yerself."

"Look at de mug on him. He's de rock-iest Mick I ever see."

"Ah! go on, he's a Dutchman. Can't yer tell?"

"Be heavens, av yez don't clear out av this, I'll make minchmate av ye, ye young hoodlums!" cried Muldoon, at last.

The young terrors only laughed the louder at this, and Muldoon might better have kept still.

However, he reached the place at last, where his men were waiting for him, and took his place at their head.

After waiting half an hour a raw-boned Mick rode up and told Muldoon that he would have to take his place just behind the Mulcahey guards.

"I'll not do it," he said. "I'll go ahead of Mulcahey, or not be in it."

"Ye'll go where ye're put," said the orderly. The procession was two-thirds over when he at last joined the line.

That added greatly to his disgust, but he took his place all the same.

Then to add to his wrath, he learned that they would not go through Madison avenue at all, and he knew that his wife would be watching for his appearance.

When he and his gang struck the line there was a great shout.

At the end of the first block his head was as big as a bushel basket.

When another block had passed it felt as big as a barrel.

Loud shouts and enthusiastic cheers went up and Muldoon took them all for himself.

A brass band preceded his gang and then came Muldoon on his big, bony horse, the plumes nodding gaily above his head, his regalia bobbing up and down in time with the beating of his heart, and his big sword clanking against his spurs.

"It's a proud day for me, so it is," he mused, "and if Bedalia could see me now, she'd be willin' to die, be heavens!"

They were just in front of Pete Budweiser's saloon at this time.

Pete was a member of Muldoon's baseball club.

"Hooray for Muldoon!" he yelled, coming out. "He was set up der beer for der crowd. Went in und help yourselves, fellows."

"Begob, I'll murder that Dutchman," muttered Muldoon, as he saw the crowd make a rush for the saloon.

Just then, however, something more important took his attention.

PART V.

JUST as Muldoon was berating Pete Budweiser in his mind for asking the crowd to drink the Solid Man's health at the latter's wealth, something happened.

It was all a put-up job by young Roger.

A man suddenly slipped out from the crowd and spread a big English flag all over the rear extension of Muldoon's horse.

That would have been bad enough as it was, but upon the flag in big, white letters, in plain sight, was the traitorous legend:

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!"

The appearance of such a motto in an Irish procession was calculated to raise a row.

That's just what it did raise, and in short order, too.

First the crowd on the curb took it up and began to yell.

Then Muldoon's own gang uttered their protests.

"Kill the bloody sassénach!"

"Down wid um!"

"Take off that flag!"

"Look at the traitor!"

"Just back from Ireland, is he?"

"Yis, and selling us out."

"Break the jaw av the pirate!"

"Down wid the renegade!"

These and a hundred other cries arose simultaneously.

The sight of that hated flag fairly enraged those paraders.

The motto upon it made it all the worse.

In a minute the cry went around that Muldoon was a rank traitor.

Those behind told it to those in front, and those on the walk told it to everybody else.

In a minute Muldoon was surrounded by a howling mob.

They rushed upon him from all sides.

The procession halted and pandemonium ensued.

"Soak the rinigade in the jaw, the vilyan! Ah, ah, ah!"

The disturbance was even greater than Roger had anticipated.

Those Micks were raving, staving mad and no error.

If there had been fewer of them, it would have fared badly with Muldoon.

There were so many of them that they were all in each other's way.

"Phwat ails yez all?" yelled Muldoon, dodging three or four tomato cans.

"Ah, ah, ah! down wid him!"

"In the name av Heaven, will yez explain?"

A stone sent his dandy hat flying off.

Some of the gang had sore jaws after that kick.

As for Muldoon, he suddenly sat down very forcibly in the saddle.

Then away went that big, bony nag on a dead run.

He knocked all organization out of the line in a jiffy.

Away he went, and the crowd scattered right and left.

Muldoon was totally unable to control him, and perhaps it was just as well that he couldn't.

At the first cross street that rattled horse found an opening and into it he dashed.

The spectators fled, pushing each other



Then came Muldoon on his big, bony horse, the plumes nodding gaily above his head, his regalia bobbing up and down in time with the beating of his heart. "It's a proud day for me, so it is," he mused, "and if Bedalia could see me now, she'd be willin' to die, be heavens!"

Before he was aware of any trouble, Muldoon found himself beset on all sides.

All hands yelled and hooted and shouted, and rushed at him.

Fists were shaken, stones were picked up and clubs brandished.

Everybody seemed bound to have the poor man's life.

He didn't know the reason any more than an infant.

The enraged Micks rushed upon him to tear him from the saddle.

All he could do was to jump upon his nag's back, the reins still in his hands.

The gang grabbed at his stirrups, at his bridle, at his feet—at everything.

Then he stood on the saddle, bent nearly double, hanging on to the reins the picture of terror.

All around him was a mad, frantic, insane, wild, ferocious mob, yelling like demons.

"In the name av goodness, phwat ails yez all?" he gasped.

"Dhrag the thraithor off his horse and shtep on him."

"And ye're the foine Irishman to lead uz, aren't you? Ah!"

"Belt the gorilla face aff him. Ah, ah!"

A shower of back-number eggs spattered all over his dizzy regalia.

"And ye just home from Ireland, you robber!"

"What wor ye doin' there—tryin' to sell us out?"

"I'll bet the queen gav' him a lot of money to do that!"

"Down wid him—ha, ha!"

A big fellow rushed in and gave a pull at Muldoon's sword.

He was nearly yanked from the saddle by the act.

The crowd was getting bigger every moment.

It filled the street from curb to curb.

A fly could not have wedged himself in by that time.

"Will yez explain?" yelled Muldoon, in a fright, while all sorts of missiles flew about him.

Some hit him, and more soaked the bystanders.

The horse had stood it at first, but now he got rattled.

Somebody pulled down the flag, and then a stone hit him in the nose.

Being assailed fore and aft, he gave a snort, chucked up his heels and skipped.

aside in their fright, and Muldoon was free.

The street was deserted and that frightened nag made the most of it.

"Whoa, ye baste!" yelled Muldoon, tugging at the reins.

The plug had the bit in his teeth and Muldoon's tugging wasn't in it.

"Will yez stop, or do yez mane to run to the river?"

Wherever he was bound, that horse didn't stop to tell.

He kept right on at a gallop and nothing could stop him.

Muldoon held on for all he was worth, and that was all he could do.

Nothing but a stone wall in his path could have stopped that brute.

"Whoa, Alexander, whoa, I say, ye wooden-headed plug!"

Alexander wouldn't whoa for all of Muldoon's telling.

He probably had never made better time in all his life.

It happened that he avoided the crowded streets, and at last, after a hard run, he dashed into the stable and stopped so quick that Muldoon was tossed clean over his head.

The poor man fell on a lot of stable refuse that had just been raked together, as if for his especial accommodation.

He was not hurt, but Christmas! what an odor there was!

The boss of the stable and three or four helpers came running to his assistance.

"What's the matter?"

"Are you hurt?"

"Why, it's Muldoon!"

"Yis, it's me," said that individual, getting on his feet, "and there's yer harse, and av he isn't dead yez'd better kill him at wanst."

"What's the matter? Is he hurt?"

"No, it's me that's hurt av annybody is, but all the same yez'd better kill um."

"For why, thin? Sure, I always thot yez wor a great mon for thim things."

"So I am, but I don't want anny more av thim. Something wint wrong, I don't know what, and it's the last parade I'll go in."

"What wor it that wint wrong?"

"I don't know, faix, but I know I wor nearly murdered be the crowd."

Mrs. Muldoon wanted an explanation, but her husband could not give it to her, and she had to be satisfied with the bare statement of the facts as Muldoon knew them.

When the papers came out in the afternoon, Muldoon saw in them the following:

His resignation as president of the very order he had got up was sent in to him that afternoon, and he was politely but firmly requested never to show his ugly mouth in the lodge-room again if he did not want to have it closed with a brick.

"Some wan played a thrick an me," he mused, after long reflection. "I don't know who it is, but, begorry, av I discover him he'll need a new pad to the base av his spine, be heavens!"

Not long after this little affair, when Muldoon came down to the flats and looked over his books, he said to his terra cotta headed jan zary:

"Nibbsey, me bye, go up to the second flure an the lift and ax for the month's



Then he stood on the saddle, bent nearly double, hanging on to the reins the picture of terror. All around him was a mad, frantic, insane, wild, ferocious mob, yelling like demons.

"What's the matter with him?"

"He's no good, that's phwat's the matter wid um."

"What made him come tearing in like that?"

"He wor frightened."

"Nonsense, he never gets frightened."

"Well, be heavens, he wor so this toime and so was I meself. A howling mob like that would terrify the divil."

"And you missed all the parade?"

"Faix, I wish I had. It'd've been better for me, I'm thinkin'. That's the last parade I'll be in, begob."

"Why, what happened?"

"Troth, I don't know, but I want no more av thim. Turn the hose an me, wan av yez, till I get the scint aff me, and thin sind around for a suit av clothes. Anny av yez that wants it, can hav me regalia. I don't."

It took some little time to get him cleaned off, and then, leaving his gorgeous regalia in the office and borrowing a hat and coat, the disgusted man went home.

"What happened ye, Terry?" asked his wife when he came in. "Didn't yez roide in the parade, affter all?"

"I did, faix, and I wish I hadn't."

"An Anglo-maniac idiot and renegade Irishman named Muldoon, whose correct appellation should be Mud, had the effrontery to offer the patriots in line a gratuitous insult by displaying upon his horse's flank the detested English flag, emblazoned with the motto, 'God Save the Queen,' but ten indignant paraders resented this outrage so vigorously that the brainless idiot who had conceived it was forced to fly, and as he has not yet been found at the morgue, it is just possible that he escaped and is now in hiding."

"Howly mackerell! wud yez listen to thot?" cried Muldoon, when he read the paragraph. "It's a dom lie. I never put anny English flag over me harse. I'll sue the editor for libel, be heavens!"

When he came to review the circumstances, however, he was forced to the conclusion that some such thing had happened, as described, for in no other way could he acconnt for the fury of the mob.

"Faix, I can't make it out at all," he said. "Dear knows, I wouldn't do a thing like that, but the crowd wor mad enough, I remember, and only an outrage like that wan cud make thim so."

rint. It wor due an the tinth and it's long past thot."

"D'ye mean de tarriers, boss?" asked the boy, giving his trousers a hitch to ease the strain on that single suspender.

"Yis, the 'longshore lady—the wan that tuck boorders."

"She ain't dere no more, boss."

"She isn't?"

"Naw! Moved out when her month was up."

"Oh, she did?"

"Yare; said yer wasn't high-toned enough for her."

"Oho! I wasn't, eh? She ped her rent, did she?"

"Cert'nly, else I'd ha' fired her."

"Ye would have fired her, is it?"

"Cert'nly; why not?"

"Do ye run these flats, me bye, or meself?"

"Well, boss, you runs 'em, but I do all de work."

"Oho! that's it, is it? Well, me gentle youth wid the roseate head, go and shtick a bill in the windy av the vacant flat, announcing that it can be hired, at wanst."

"Why, dat flat ain't empty, boss," said

Nibbsey, practicing that everlasting dance step of his.

"Didn't yez just tell me that the 'long-shoreman's wife had vacated it, ye monkey?"

"Cert'nly I did."

"Then it must natherally be vacant, musn't it?"

"Naw."

"How can that be, me young song and dance fiend?"

"'Cause dere's somebody in it, dat's why. See?"

"When did they move in?"

"Couple o' nights ago. You know de party and I s'posed it was all right."

"I know thim!"

"Yare."

"Be heavens! I didn't know the others had moved. Who has the flat now, me clumsy-futted Mercury?"

"Ah, you know. Old Firecrackers. I can't tink of his name."

"Old Firecrackers, is it?"

"Yare; dat's de feller."

"Yez will have to elucidate wid more perspicacity, me budding ganius in the thespian line, before I grasp the situation," said Muldoon. "The synonym of Old Fireworks is far too vague to give me anny idea av the identity av the gintleman in question."

"Ah, go on! you know who I mean, boss," said Nibbsey, with no little disgust. "Feller wid de sojer clothes, what used ter live in de hotel when we kep' it."

"When we kept the hotel, is it?" repeated Muldoon.

"Cert'nly. Don't yer remember de time, boss?"

"I remimber whin I kept a hotil, ye young grasshopper, but I fail to recall to me mintal vision that ye hod annything to do wid it."

"Ah, go on! what ye beefin' about, anyhow, boss? You kep' de ranch and I was in it. See?"

"Yis, I do, but to return to the gintleman. Ye say he's a sojer?"

"Yare; fought in de war, drove a baggage wagon or sumpin'. Got ginger-colored hair, what he are got, mixed wid pepper and salt, allus gettin' on his ear 'bout sumpin' or other."

"Oho, be heavens! now yez do call 'um to mind. It's the major yez mean. Major Buster, av some regiment or another, I forget exactly what."

"Yare; dat's de snoozer I've been tryin' to tell yer about."

"And so Major Buster has moved into the second flat?"

"Bet yer life, boss, him and all de family, an' dey're got de rockiest lot of tings you ever see. Take me oat, I wisht you could ha' seen 'em when dey come."

"So he's brot hees family, has he?" asked Muldoon, looking perplexed.

"Well, I guess so, boss. Dey was all wid him. Dey's a sandy-headed old gal, three kids, a young feller 'bout my size, two squallers, a nigger gal to look after dem, a old woman, a—"

"Howld an, ye monkey! howld an!" interrupted Muldoon. "Don't tell me anny more. There's nine persons ye're mintioned already, and how in blazes they're all goin' to get into a six room flat is more than I can comprehend."

"Well, I didn't ax 'em any riddles, boss," said Nibbsey, complacently, "'cause I knowed yer knowed dem, and I guessed it was all right."

"It'll be all right whin I get me money," muttered Muldoon, "but av I remimber rightly, me ould war horse wor not in the habit av payin' his boord bills wid anny startling degree av regularity whin he had apartmints in the hotel. Is he long in, me bye?"

"Got all settled, boss. Say, get on ter dis."

"Oh! I met her just de oder evenin', She's a la-la, yer bet yer life, Down in the shady lane where the putty violets grow, She's goin' to be me little—"

"That's enough av that!" yelled Muldoon, banging the desk with a big ruler. "Is it a lunatic yez want to make av me! Begob, av yez sing that song av yours again in less nor six months I'll massacre yez."

"Ah, you don't know a good ting when yer see it, boss," said the youth, agitating

the frills of his blue jumper in an effort to get his suspender in the proper ridge on his shoulder. "Whereabouts do yer live anyhow, dat yer don't like music? Dat's der latest thing out, dat is."

"Thin let it shtay out and niver come in here to dhrive me woild."

Nibbsey made himself less pronounced a feature of the scene, and Muldoon, happening to look out of the window at that moment, saw a military-looking figure, with swelled chest, fiery whiskers and semi-bald head, just leaving the house.

He flew out of the office, and was on the walk in a jiffy.

"Good-mornin', major! It's quite proud I am to see yez!" he vociferated, having nearly overturned the military gentleman in his haste.

"Egad, sah, you'd bettah look where you are going, sah, and not run into a ge'man in this unpahdon'ble mannah, sah. Yas, sah, by gad, you had, sah, or Ah'll teach you— Ah, go' gad, if it isn't Majah Muldoon! Mo'nin' sah! Ah hope you're well, sah?"

"Yis, major, I'm as well as can be expected. I just h'ard that ye war an intimate av me apartment house, and I thot—"

"Yes, sah; just come up f'om G'o'gia, sah, and looking fo' suitable—"

"I thot ye wor from Virginia, major?"

"Yes, sah, served as cunnel in the fo'ty-fo'th rig'ment, sah, in the wah, but my home is G'o'gia, sah."

"Now, I come to think av it, I had an idee ye wor ginerel av a South Car'lina regimint," said Muldoon. "Im quite sure av it."

"Yas, sah. I was in the fo'teenth Ca'lina cavalry, sah, held the rank of left-nant, rig'ment all cut to pieces, sah, had to disband, joined the fo'ty-fo'th G'o'gia, sah. Now I'm No'th, sah, but I'm a So'thin ge'man, sah, yas, sah."

"Yis, so I've h'ard ye remark on more than wan occasion," said Muldoon, "but that wor not phwat I cam' out to say. Yez have taken apartmints in me house, I believe?"

"Yas, sah, Ah have," said the major, swelling out his chest. "Ah have a great regard fo' yo', sah, and would rather live undah yo' roof, sah, than anywhere else, sah, really, sah, and myself and family are agreed on that, sah."

"Ye flatther me," said Muldoon, "but flatthery isn't business. I persume that ye know I always collect me rint in advance?"

"Rent, sah?" said the major. "What do I care about the picayune rent. Our friendship is too sacred a mattah, sah, to let a mere trifle of rent come between us, sah. I intend to pay rent fo' the rooms, sah."

"Yer intintions may be all right, major," said Muldoon, "but av I had a month's rint in me fishts, I'd be more satisfied av the integrity av yer intintions than I am now, be heavens!"

"Doyo' mean to say, sah, that I would defraud yo', sah?" asked the major, growing unusually red in the face. "Remembah, sah, that I am Majah Bustah, sah, of the army, sah."

"Yez may not intind to cheat me, major," said Muldoon, dryly; "but people sometimes forget these little things."

"No, sah; I don't fo'get, sah. Yo' shall be paid, sah, when I receive my remittances."

"Do they come be post or be express? When do yez expect thim?"

"By lettah, sah. I expect them any day, sah."

"Faix, thin, it may be another case av the letther that niver came," muttered Muldoon, half to himself.

"Yas, sah; any day, sah," said the major, continuing. "Will yo' do me the honah, Mr. Muldoon, of taking something?"

"Troth, I'll make sure av a dhrink annyhow," thought Muldoon, as he accepted the invitation.

Together they went to the nearest hostelry and imbibed a portion of spirituous liquor, the major taking what is known as four fingers.

After the potations were disposed of the major began to do some juggling in his pockets.

He produced keys, button hooks, lead

pencils and bits of chewing gum from various pockets, but no current funds.

Muldoon gazed upon this business with vague apprehension, not to say alarm.

"Well, really, upon mah honah!" said the major, at length, "that is very queah."

"Have yez been touched, do yez think?" asked Muldoon.

"Have I been what, sah?" asked the major, continuing his search.

"Have yez been robbed, to use the ivery day expression?"

"Robbed, sah, no, sah. I have come away from the ho'se without money. Oblige me by lending me a dollar, mah deah sah."

"Sure," said Muldoon, producing a cart wheel, while the servitor behind the mahogany winked.

The major's absent-mindedness continued, for, after paying for the refreshment, he put the change in his pocket and went away without a word.

"Wanst more I'm a sucker," said Muldoon. "I niver thot I'd be cot be that ould trick, be heavens! I deserve to be kicked be a mule. Who wants the job?"

PART VI.

HERE was a prospect that unless Muldoon hustled, all of his apartments would be filled by his friends, relations and hangers-on, none of whom were in the habit of paying for their accommodations if they could avoid it.

Already he had the Hon. Mike Growler, Dan, Mr. Burns, Mr. Edward Geoghegan and Major Buster, together with all that appertained to them, and the gang was a pretty good family in itself.

In order not to have any more of the gang descend upon him he made haste and got tenants for all his vacant flats, and only then did he feel safe.

However, in the midst of business Muldoon could take his pleasure, and it happened soon after this that he went with his wife to a big ball in the Opera House attended by all the swells.

"Troth, Bedalia, we can be as high-toned as anny av thim nobbs," he said, as, attired in a swell full-dress suit with Mrs. Muldoon, resplendant in silk, feathers and diamonds on his arm, he stepped from his carriage at the door of the great building and entered with the throng.

He presently came across Roger and his wife and one or two acquaintances on the avenue, and when the dancing began they quickly had a set of their own formed.

Roger had plenty of friends there, for he was a swell young fellow and knew lots of stylish people, and his mother had plenty of partners while Muldoon did not get left either.

Muldoon's wife was fat, a good deal over forty, and was not at all beautiful, but her husband was rich and that made all the difference in the world.

"Faix, Bedalia, no wan wud think to luck at yez now," said Muldoon, "that it worn't so very long ago that ye wor hunting the pigs from the dure in Ireland."

"Go an wid yer falsifications, Terry," said the lady. "Sure it's no disgrace to be Irish. No wan wud mistake ye for a Frenchman, annyway."

"No, but I wor tuck for a Rooshan nobleman, the night. It's the distinguished air I have, me Tipperary philopena."

"For a Rooshan, was it? Faix, thin, ye're jist homely enough."

"Well, I'd rather have intilligence than beauty anny day, but it's hard lines for thim that has nayther."

"Oh, Terry, luck at the ould man in the box," said Mrs. Muldoon, changing the subject.

In one of the first tier boxes, near the proscenium, a party of four or five gentlemen had just entered, among them being a little, old, white-headed gentleman wearing a long linen duster.

"Faix, that's a quare coschume for a ball," muttered Muldoon.

That was not the queerest thing about the old fellow, how-ever, for he presently sat on the box rail with his feet hanging over.

"Begorry, that's an aisy attichude," said Muldoon.

The next thing the old fellow did was to stand on the rail and walk five or six feet waving his arms.

"Faix, he must be crazy," said Muldoon, general attention being attracted to the box by this time.

"Oh, glory! wud yez look at him now!" cried Mrs. Muldoon. The old codger was standing on his head on the box rail at this moment.

Nearly everybody on the floor was looking at the box now.

Some laughed, some were disgusted and some said that it was a shame.

The old man now jumped off the rail into the box and loud voices began to be heard. There was evidently a first-class row going on in the box.

The old man waved his arms, jumped up five or six feet, sprang on the rail and then back again and appeared to be greatly excited.

The people below were certainly so, and there were many muttered calls for the police.

"Begorry, the fellow must have been beginning early to have got parlyzed so soon," remarked Muldoon.

He was as near to the box as any one and could see the whole business.

"You're a liar!" suddenly rang out from the box, in squeaky tones.

It was the white-headed man that had spoken, evidently.

One of the men in the box suddenly seized him, lifted him off his feet and fired him bodily right out over the heads of the people.

There was a general stampeding and screaming, and a considerable open space was cleared in a jiffy.

The old man flew out fully thirty feet and then dropped to the floor all in a heap.

"Be heavens! it's kilt he is," cried Muldoon, who was nearest to the poor man. "I'd like to parlyze thim suckers, so I wud!"

Then he rushed forward to pick up the poor unfortunate.

The whole business was a fake.

Muldoon had been stuffed as well as the dummy that he picked up.

The old man was nothing but a hoax.

Of course, of all the throng present, Muldoon was the very man to be sold.

It was just like his luck. One moment only sufficed to show him that the thing was a fraud.

He had only to pick it up to find that out.

Then he was mad and no mistake.

"Go an, ye ould stuff!" he cried, giving the dummy a belt over the head and throwing it from him. "Av yez was alive I'd break yer jaw for that!"

Just then up rushed two big policemen.

They collared Muldoon in a hurry.

"Shame!" cried some one.

"Put the brute in jail!"

"He ought to be lynched!"

"What do yez want av me?" asked Muldoon.

"Just hear him!"

"After striking a dead man!"

"Hanging is too good for him!"

Everybody in the crowd seemed to want to say something.

The original perpetrators of the joke were entirely forgotten.

It was just Muldoon's luck to be blamed for the whole business.

"Come on," said one of the cops. "You can't fight in here."

"Who is fighting?"

"You were."

"Ye're a liar! I wor not."

"Didn't I see you throw that man down?"

"I trun no mon down at all. It's not a man, it's a dummy."

Some of the crowd now discovered the thing to be a fraud.

Then they were more mad than ever.

"The idea of such a thing!"

"Frightening people in that way!"

"He ought to be arrested!"

"It's just a low, nahsty jaoke, that's what it is, don't yer knaow."

"Come on," said the copper again, "you can't play no such jokes in this place."

Then the two of them dragged poor Muldoon off the floor.

"Yez air a couple av stuffs," he said, when he reached the lobby. "Don't yez

know that I wor sucked in be the dummy the same as anny wan ilse?"

The coppers would not have it so, however.

They declared that Muldoon had originated the whole business.

Whatever he could say made no difference.

"Yez must think I'm a birrud, be heavens," he protested, "to throw the dummy down, and thin be on the flure wrestling wid um the next minyute. It's no sinse at all yez hov."

"See here, now, don't you give us any lip or we'll run you in."

"If you want to stay here you can, but you don't go on the floor again. See?"

"Yez are a couple av stuffs," muttered Muldoon, the men having now released him.

Then he started for the dancing-floor again, but the men collared him.

"Leggo av me, me wife is in there, and I want to get her. I've had all I want av yer dom ball."

"Oh, yes you have, but you don't go in there again."

"You want to keep quiet, or you'll get locked up sure."

"But I want to get me wife, I tell yez, and go home."

"That's too thin."

"You haven't any wife."

"You can't fool us."

"We ain't no chickens."

"That's an old game, that is."

"But I tell yez she's in there."

"Oh, yes, of course."

"But you don't go, all the same."

Muldoon was tearing, raving mad.

It didn't do him a bit of good.

He started for the ball-room again.

As soon as he did he was collared.

The other people got in the way and blocked him.

Finally he gave it up in disgust.

"I'm goin' to the smoking-room," he said, "and wan av yez big stuffs can tell me wife where I am whin she axes for me. I'm Terrence Muldoon, ex-alderman, baseball champeen and renowned traveler, av

anny body axes yez, and I don't give a rap fur the whole polis force av New York, be heavens!"

Then he started up-stairs for the smoking-room.

"What?" gasped one of the coppers.

"Is that Muldoon?"

"He can get us sacked."

"Go tell him he can go back."

Muldoon was half way up to the second tier by this time, however.

Roger had seen the end of the fracas and he quickly returned to his mother and told her it was all right.

Muldoon remained in the smoking-room for another hour, by which time he had quieted down.

The jokers who had fired the dummy among the dancers did not try any more funny business and people forgot all about them.

Muldoon could have returned if he had liked, but he was mad and you couldn't coax him to go back now.

After the storm came a calm, however, and when Roger went to look for him, long past midnight, he found him in a chair in the smoking-room fast asleep.

"That's just like pop," chuckled the young fellow. "I don't suppose you could have dragged him back to that ball-room after he once made up his mind to stay out."

When Muldoon awoke the first thing he said was:

"Yez can take yer ould ball and use it to trow stones at, be heavens! I don't give a copper for the whole av yez and it'll be a long time before yez see me here again. I'm a four hundred be mesilf and I don't ax anny odds av anny av yez."

"Come, pop, it's time to go home," said Roger. "Mother and Kitty are waiting."

"And a good thing it is toime," said Muldoon, "and it's the last affair av the kind I'm goin' to, not aven av Ward McAllister wint down on hees knees and axed me."

Muldoon's friends got hold of the story somehow, and for several days he heard nothing else.

They made him so tired that at last he was obliged to order champagne for the

crowd and drink forgetfulness of the whole business in sparkling wine.

"Yer must be a dizzy old gull with bow legs and a red head, Mul," laughed the Hon. Mike, "ter get ketched by an old gag like that. I'm an old hayseeder from the tooralooral districts, I am, but I don't bite at no such bait as that."

"I could read you a selection from one of my lyrics," said Mr. Burns, the poet, striking a relaxed energy attitude, "which would amply illustrate the point in question, or I could, by a few appropriate gestures—"

"Well, thin, yez won't!" cried Muldoon. "I can stand annything but that."

"Sure, I niver thot ye wor so green as that, Terry," said brother Dan.

"Ye're not the mon to talk about bein' green, Dan," sniffed Muldoon. "Didn't I see yez tryin' to post a letther in wan av thim fire-alarm boxes the other day. Go an, ye bog-trotter, the smell av the steerage is not off yez yet, be heavens!"

This time the laugh was on Dan, and the dummy's health was drank in silence.

Nibbsey also got hold of the story, and one morning, when Muldoon came down to the flats, that red-headed imp said to him:

"Say, boss, I are got a invite to a ball dis eve; kin I go? I want ter work off dat dummy racket on de fellers."

"Av yez say another worrud about that, me young grasshopper," said Muldoon, shaking his fist, "I'll nominate ye for president and ruin yer character foriver."

Now and then Muldoon had trouble with his tenants on account of certain orders of his not being obeyed.

The orders he gave were reasonable enough.

The women of the house did not like Muldoon, however.

Consequently, his very giving of an order was reason enough for them to disobey it.

He was forever telling them to send down their ashes, *et cetera*, at certain specified times.

They were forever sending them down at the wrong time, and complaining because they were not taken away.

He said that things should not be left out in the halls. After that the stairs and passageways were always littered.

Mrs. Finnegan and the Italian woman were the worst offenders, but the others were nearly as bad.

Even Mary Ann, the Hon. Mike's wife, would go contrary to what Muldoon said, and Dan's wife had always done so.

One day Muldoon went out in the yard at the rear and looked up.

There was a washtub on the fire-escape in front of Mrs. Schumacher's kitchen window.

On the same structure, at the Finnegan window, there was a broken rocking horse.

"Be heavens! I'll not allow annything on the fire-escapes," said Muldoon. "It's agan the lah and I'll not have it."

At that moment Mrs. Schumacher appeared.

"Hallo, there, Dutch!" bawled Muldoon, "take in that tub."

"Vas is loss mit you, anyhow?" asked the Dutch woman. "Vas you been grazzy?"

"No, I ain't. Take that tub off the fire-escape. I'll not have annything put on it."

"Dot hurt nodings once," said Mrs. Schumacher. "You was got a crank already."

"Niver mind av I have," snorted Muldoon. "Vhat av there wor a fire? I can't have the laddher litthered up wid a lot of stuff."

"Ach, du bist verikt!" replied the woman. "Dot don't hurt somedings, I tolt you."

Muldoon went indoors, and sent Nibbsey up with orders to all the tenants that the fire-escapes were to be kept clear of all articles, no matter of what nature, whether useful, ornamental or otherwise.

That settled it.

If anybody except Muldoon had given those orders, they would have been obeyed.

Because he gave them, every woman in the house got her back up and kept it there.

The next morning Muldoon went out in the yard after something or another.

Happening to look up, a great sight met his eyes.

On every fire-escape landing was a wash-tub. On some of them there were two, and there was no such thing as getting down without wetting one's feet.

Muldoon stared aghast at the sight, and for a few moments he could not speak.

"Is that the way me ordhers are carr'd out?" he muttered. "Faix, there's something an ivery dom wan av them. I'll not shtand it, be heavens! Hallo, there, Mrs.

"Never mind me at all, but take thim tubs off the fire-escapes."

"For why you make so much drubbles once?" growled the German woman. "You was been grazey."

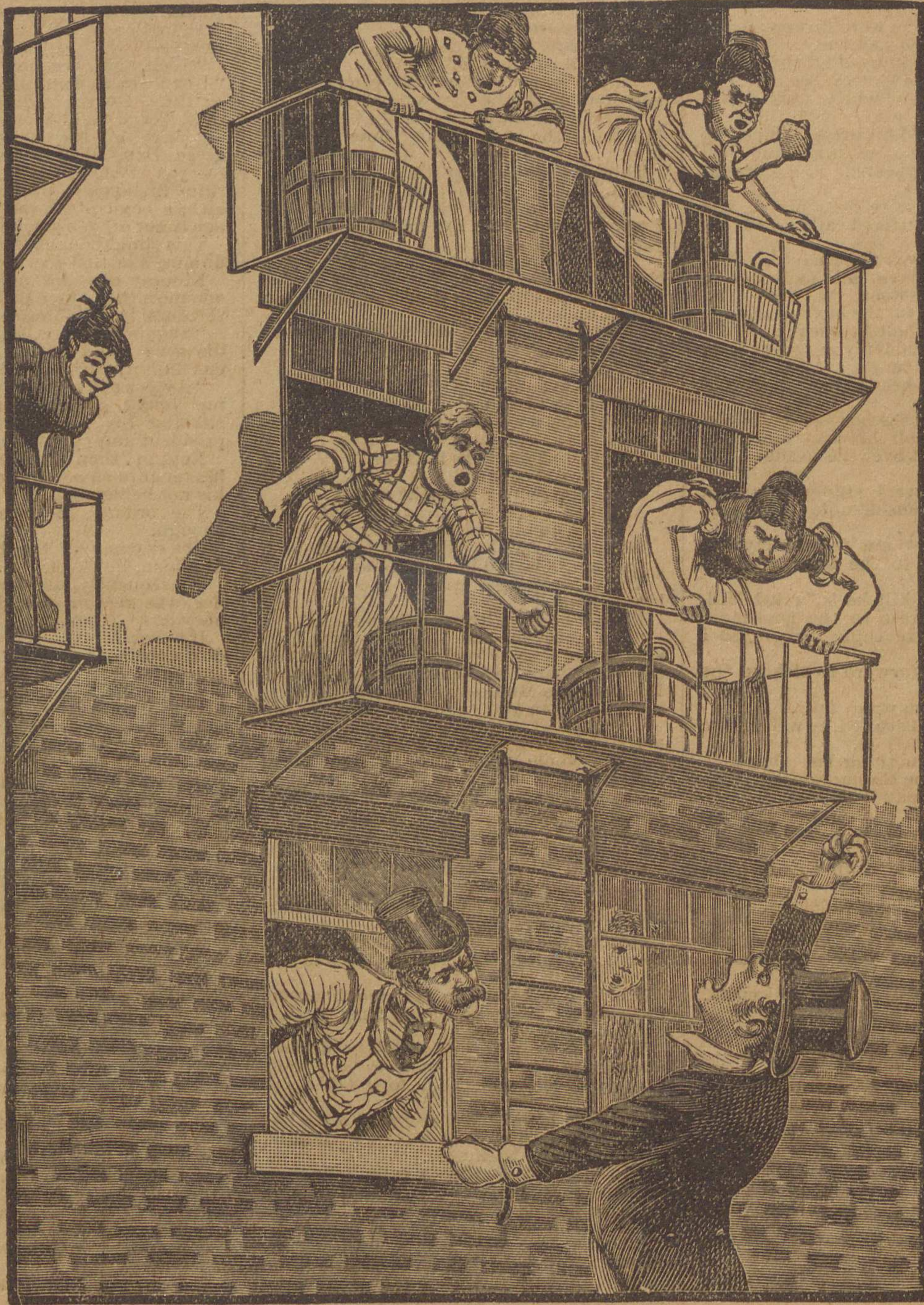
"Take thim tubs off the landing, I tell yez," yelled Muldoon, "or, be heavens, I'll sind ivery wan av thim to the pound!"

"What's der matter down dere, Mul, old sport?" asked the Hon. Mike Growler,

"Dat's just what I say," said the Hon. Mike. "I'm a red-headed bomb thrower, I am, and I'm down on monopoly. Der tub stays just where it is. See?"

"And, be heavens, I say it's got to be taken off!" cried Muldoon. "Yez pay no rint, Mike Growler, and yez have got to do as I tell yez."

Then all the women had something to say. "Irisha loaf, eata corna beef, no gooda."



"What's der matter down dere, Mul, old sport?" asked the Hon. Mike Growler, sticking his head out of the window. "Yer all der time beefin' at something."

The Hon. Mike wore a new shiny silk hat and was in his shirt-sleeves.

Finnegan, Mrs. Piscorelli, Mrs. Dan, Mary Ann, ould woman Shoemaker, Mrs. Buster, hallo, I say!"

His bawling brought one or two women to the windows.

"What do yez want, ye raw-mouthed Mick?" asked Madame Finnegan.

"Take that tub off the fire-escape, that's phwat I want."

"I will not!"

"Take it off, I tell yez. It's agin the ordhers."

"Irishaman no gooda, talka alla time wid a hat," said Mrs. Piscatelli.

sticking his head out of the window. "Yer all der time beefin' at something."

The Hon. Mike wore a new shiny silk hat and was in his shirt-sleeves.

Mrs. Mike had just gone out upon the platform.

"Take in them washtubs, ivery wan av them, I tell yez."

"Deed and I won't."

Dan Muldoon's wife now appeared on the fire-escape.

"Go away, you nasty beast!" she exclaimed. "There ain't no room to put the tubs nowhere else, and if we want to keep 'em here we're going to do it."

"Ach, you vas grazey once."

"I'll not shtir a peg, begob."

"Go an in, ye ould crank."

Muldoon was getting pretty mad by this time.

"Go an, I tell yez," he cried, shaking his fist at the windows, "go an in an' take aff thim tubs, I tell yez, or I'll have ivery wan av yez put out av the house."

There was a general outcry at this, and the women proceeded to resent it in a manner of their own.

PART VII.

THOSE women were tearing mad by this time. Muldoon had threatened to have them all put out of the house just because they left things on the fire-escape.

"Let's dhrown the sucker!" cried Mrs. Finnegan.

Schumacher's dirty suds, and she in turn soaked the signora.

Those below had evidently forgotten that there was any one above.

Those above did not seem to care about those beneath, and so out went the suds, the dirty water and the *et ceteras*.

Among the sufferers was the Hon. Mike Growler, who was on the second floor.

I'm goin' ter have a hull tubful chucked down me neck!"

There were others who had something to say about the water question as well as the Hon. Mike.

"Hola smokea! whata for you trowa de wat' alla overa me?" demanded Signora Piscatelli. "Irisha loaf, no good, alla same Chinaman, keepa outa de place more good!"



As with one impulse every woman grabbed a tub and let fly. Mrs. Schumacher and Madam Dubois on the top floor, Mrs. Finnegan and Mrs. Dan on the fourth, Signora Piscatelli and the major's wife on the third, and so on down, all contributed to the shower.

As with one impulse every woman grabbed a tub and let fly.

Mrs. Schumacher and Madam Dubois on the top floor, Mrs. Finnegan and Mrs. Dan on the fourth, Signora Piscatelli and the Major's wife on the third, and so on down, all contributed to the shower.

You can imagine the confusing result. The shower was intended for Muldoon but he did not get the whole of it.

The Dutch woman and the French lady being at the top of the house, were the only ones who got off without a wetting.

Mrs. Finnegan got soused with Mrs.

That brand new silk dicier of his was washed off in a jiffy.

He was without his coat, and that fancy striped shirt of his was a sight.

Three stories of dirty water, hot, cold and medium, descended upon him.

That was rather more than the Lily of Nevada could stand at one dose.

Mr. Growler took in his head so quick that he banged it against the sash.

"I'm a dizzy old Iowa sunflower of temperance, and I yell fur cold water," he remarked, "but I'll be cut up inter slabs if

"Hold an there, ye Dootch sauerkraut eater. Do yez want to dhrownd me intirely? Begob, I'll come up there and paralyze ye intirely!"

Muldoon got the worst of the business.

He was deluged.

There wasn't a dry stitch on him in ten seconds.

His hat floated away on a puddle, and the water ran from him in rivers.

A cake of soap carromed on his bald spot and a stray scrubbing-board nestled in his bosom. As soon as he could he beat a hasty retreat.

The circus was not over yet, however, by several features.

Italy swore at Ireland, the noble State of Georgia cursed Sweden, Ireland anathematized Germany, and so it went.

There was a high pressure, low barometer, centrifugal cyclone let loose in two shakes.

Everybody except the two fifth flat families were in the middle of it.

Compliments flew as thick as huckleberries in August.

"Ye dirthy Dootch tramp, I've a great moind to break the head av ye."

"It's all yer fault, annyhow, Mrs. Finnegan. Yez had a right to look out."

"Vas ist loss annyhow once? Don't you got some senses to take in your headt once when der vater come?"

"Me smasha de face, takea de knife, cutta de troat, Irisha loaf! Dutcha loaf; alla loaf; no good! Calla de policeaman, locka up de suck, taka de life."

"By gad, sah, I'm a ge'man, sah, f'om G'o'gia, sah, and I nevah was used to such conduct befo', sah. No, sah, nevah!"

"I'm a giddy old water lily, I am, and I bloom der best in der rain, but I draw der line at soapsuds and don't ye forget it."

"Get out o' thot, ye big blatherskite. It wor yer own fright av a woife that deluged me, so she did, and I'll have the lah on ye, so I will."

When signs of a fight appeared, the Hon. Mike vanished.

He was as great a coward as he was a blower, and just a little bit of bluff would squelch him.

If he backed out, however, there were others who stayed in.

Finnegan attempted to throw a soiled dish rag at the German lady on the floor above, but it fell short.

It came back and hit her on the head, and at the same time a weary potato, thrown by Mrs. Piscatelli, struck her in the ear.

"Loafer vomans!"

"Go an, ye Dootch hog."

"Sacarament! alla loaf; nobod' no good."

Then the Dutch woman threw a dirty rag at Finnegan and Piscatelli got it.

There was war in those flats in short order.

Broom sticks, tin dippers, flat-irons, dirty water and everything else flew about.

The yard was littered with rubbish in a jiffy.

"Come up here, Macaroni, and I'll break the nose av ye!" bawled Madam Finnegan.

"You comea downa here, I killa you quick, Irisha loaf! Got too mucha de jaw, makea too mucha de noise."

"Go an, ye dago, I wudn't dirthy me hands an yez."

Major Buster got to jawin' at Dan's wife, Finnegan railed at all hands, the Italian woman scolded the Dutch woman, and the noise was something frightful.

The people on the other street all wanted to know what the fuss was about, and windows right and left on both sides were lined with heads.

The Irishwoman came down to accept the Italian's challenge, and all the rest came to look on.

There was a free fight going on in a brace of shakes.

The signora blacked Madam Finnegan's eye, and the Irishwoman pulled a handful of hair out of her rival's head.

The racket was something terrible, and Muldoon, down cellar fixing himself up, heard it.

Pretty soon Nibbsey came in, all excitement, and said:

"Gee! boss, dere's a reg'lar scrappin' match goin' on up on de Italian's floor. Dem women is terrors."

"A fight, is it?"

"Bet yer life, and all hands is into it."

"Then they can all come out av it, be heavens, for I'll not have it. I want the place quite and respectable, and I'll do it av I hov to turn overy sowl av thim out av the house."

Up went Muldoon, determined to secure order.

As he reached the second floor, a posse of police entered the house.

Somebody had complained that a man was being murdered in the house and a squad of men had at once been dispatched to the place to quell the disturbance.

Muldoon reached the scene of the fracas and bawled out:

"Go an out av this, all av yez. Do yez think it's a shootin' gallery yez are in? Go in, Mrs. Farinelli, and ye, Finnegan, ye ould hag, go on up-stairs. Phwat are yez doin' here, Mrs. Shoemaker? This isn't your flure. Clear away out of this, the lot av yez, or I'll give yez all notice to leave."

By the time Muldoon had made himself heard the gang had got onto him.

Then they went for him hot and strong.

He was obliged to retreat in haste without having accomplished what he had come for.

Down-stairs he dusted in a jiffy and ran right into the grip of the police.

"Here, we want you!" cried the man in command.

"Howld an, yez don't want me at all, it's thim wans above," cried Muldoon.

"I'm glad yez come."

The cops went up and took in Frau Schumacher, Signora Piscatelli, Mrs. Finnegan, Mike Growler's wife, the Major and two or three others.

Muldoon was scooped in with the rest, but that was just his luck.

All hands swore that he was the cause of the whole business and he was pulled in with the rest.

The coppers were new on that beat and did not know Muldoon or they wouldn't have done it.

Off went the whole gang to the nearest police station, followed by a lot of boys.

When they went in you would have thought that pandemonium had suddenly been dumped into the place.

The sergeant at the desk was nearly deafened by the noise.

The voices of angry women are not very sweet or melodious, and the combination of several of that sort was by no means harmonious to his ears.

"Silence!" yelled the officer in charge, pounding on his desk, and the noise quieted down.

"What's the charge?"

"Quarreling."

"Who began it?"

"This man," and Muldoon was indicated.

"Ye're a liar!" said our landlord. "It wor thryin' to quite the disturbance I wor, and these two vilyans—"

Then Mrs. Finnegan started in to tell her version of the affair.

She had uttered only a few words when the Italian signora put in her story.

Mrs. Schumacher followed, and then all the rest.

Once more the racket was unbearable.

"Take 'em all to court, the whole gang of them!" howled the sergeant. "Let 'em settle it there."

Court was in session when Muldoon and the gang were taken in, and in a few minutes that case was heard.

The women told their story, and the judge promptly said:

"Discharged; the prisoner Muldoon to pay ten dollars fine."

"But, yer honor," cried Muldoon, "that's an unjust decision. Sure, the house is mine, and I've a right to presarve order in it, and I ought to have some—"

"If you don't keep quiet I'll fine you twenty-five dollars and give you six months besides," said the judge, severely.

"Yis, but yer honor must hear phwat I have to say. It's not fair to hear only wan side, and—"

"Will you be quiet?" thundered the modern Daniel. "Officer, take that man out. Ten dollars fine—the others are discharged. Next case."

There was no help for it and Muldoon stepped down.

He paid his fine and then left the court very much disgusted.

"Be heavens, av I hov anny pull in politics at all these days," he grumbled, "I'll see that that sucker av a judge is baten be a treminjous majority av he iver runs for offis again. That's what I get for thryin' to make pace among a lot av women."

As Muldoon reached the street he encountered the Hon. Mike Growler standing in front of the building.

The Nevada statesman had his hat on one side, a cigar stuck in one corner of his mouth at a sharp, upward angle, a daisy adorned the button-hole of his cutaway

coat, his hands were stuck in his pockets and his mustache seemed bigger and blacker and more aggressive than ever.

"Hallo, Mul, had to give up ten cold plunkers, did yer? Playin' in hard luck, ain't yer, old sport?"

"Wor ye there, Mike?"

"Why cert."

"And saw that robber av a judge make me pay tin cases?"

"Cert'nly, I did. I ain't blind, am I? Reckon dis ain't one o' yer lucky days, is it, Mul?"

"And d'yez mean to say that ye war in the coort and saw the robbery and niver come to me assistance?"

"What could I do?" asked Mike, with a huff.

"Couldn't yez give yer ividence that I war the aggrieved party in the affair at the flats? Av course, yez could."

"Mary Ann was in it, wasn't she?"

"Yis."

"Den what makes yer ax me that? I gotter look after me own folks fust off, haven't I?"

"Maybe yez have, but why was I fined and ivery wan else let off?"

"'Cos you're a sucker, I reckon," and Mr. Growler strolled off, leaving a smoky wave behind him.

"Be heavens, he's right!" muttered Muldoon. "I am a sucker iver to let that gang get into me house, and I think the best thing that cud happen to me wud be its bein' burnt to the ground wid all them vilyans in it."

He left affairs at the flats to the red-headed Nibbsey after that, or for three or four days at least, and during that time there wasn't a single washtub or pail left on the fire-escape.

The first of April was nearly due, and several of Muldoon's friends bore it in mind, although the worthy man himself never thought a word about it.

On the morning of the great day devoted to practical jokes of all kinds, Muldoon received a note from the Alderman requesting his presence at the latter's place of business at once.

The Alderman was an old friend of Muldoon's, and kept a saloon down-town on the west side.

Without even tumbling to the fact that the note might be a hoax, Muldoon walked over to Ninth avenue and took the elevated railroad to a point near the Alderman's place of business.

When he entered he found the Alderman in a white jacket and apron, standing behind the counter ready for business.

"Good-morning, Alderman."

"Good-morning, your—well, well, if it isn't Muldoon. Why, how are ye anyhow?"

"Oh, I'm fine enough!"

"And the missis, she's well?"

"She don't complain."

"And Roger, the young scamp, how's he?"

"Most unfortunately well, the vilyan."

"I hear he got married in Ireland?"

"He did."

"Nice girrul?"

"Fine."

"Anny money?"

"Slathers av it."

"Well, well, I'm glad to hear of it."

"Yis, so am I. He has to buy his own cigars now."

"Won't yez have something, Terry?" asked the Alderman presently.

"I don't mind av I do."

"What are ye doing these days, Muldoon?" asked the Alderman, when the glasses were turned upside down.

"Running a row of flats, just for occupation."

"Are ye now?"

"Yis. They're where the old hotel was. Ye know the place."

"Sure I do, and what brings ye down-town?"

Muldoon looked at his friend in astonishment.

"Phwat brings me down-town, is it?" he repeated.

"That's what I said."

"Well, ye ought to know, if anny wan does."

"Why ought I?"

"Because ye sint for me to come down, av coorse."

"I sint for ye?"

"Sure."

"Troth, I did not."

"Well, I say ye did, and I have yer own letther to prove it."

"I'd like to see it, thin, for no letther have I sint to any one the day."

After a hunt through various pockets, Muldoon found the note and handed it to the Alderman.

The latter read it and then laughed.

"I niver sint that," he said.

"Ye didn't?"

"No, and whisper, do yez mind the date on it?"

"I did not."

"Well, it's the first of April, that's what it is."

A light broke in upon Muldoon all of a sudden.

"And yez didn't write it?"

"I did not."

"And yez didn't want to see me?"

"Not particularly, though yez knows I'm always glad to see ye, Terry. Have a cigar?"

"I don't mind, but I'd like to catch the sucker that sint me away down here for nothing. Ye're sure it wasn't yersilf?"

"Avcoorse I am. Didn't I say so?"

Muldoon did not half believe the Alderman, who, he thought knew about the joke, even if he had not perpetrated it.

"What's thim boxes over in the corner?" he asked.

"Oh, thim's ordhers for some private customers I have. The expressman will be here shortly to take thim away."

"Well, won't yez have something yersilf, Alderman?"

"I will, seeing it's you, Terry, but it's not often I drink at me own bar."

Three or four customers came in presently, and the Alderman was called away, while Muldoon took up a newspaper and went over in the corner to read it.

"He wor at the bottom av that job on me, I'll bet a dollar," he thought, "but I'll get aven wid him for it."

Then he walked over to where the express packages lay waiting to be taken out, and quietly affixed his own card to the handle of a demijohn of whisky, taking off the tag already on it.

In a few minutes the expressman called and took the parcels away, Muldoon smiling to himself as the fellow went out.

"Well, Alderman," he said, after a little, "as yez don't want me and I've a heap av things to do, I think I'll go home. Will yez have something?"

"Yis, I don't mind."

When the glasses were turned bottom up once more, Muldoon went away with a very fine and large smile upon his classic mug.

"That's wan on the Alderman," he mused. "Faix, I don't think he'll want to play anny more first av April jokes on me afther this."

Now it happened that the card which Muldoon affixed to the demijohn had the flat address on it and not that of his own house.

It also happened that Muldoon went to the flats instead of going home, but not immediately, as he happened to meet one or two friends first.

When he reached the flats he descended to the office, saw the demijohns standing there, smiled and said to Nibbsey:

"Go up stairs, me bye, and ax me brother and Mr. Growler and the Major, the mad pote, too, av he's there, all to come down and whin yez return bring some glasses wid yer."

In a few minutes the gang was present.

"My friends," said Muldoon, pointing to the demijohns, "I've put up a job on the Alderman in return for wan he put on me, but I think I've got the best av it. Have a drink wid me, all hands. I only wish the Alderman wor here to enj'y his own whisky phwat I swiped from him, be heavens!"

Nibbsey came in now with a corkscrew and a lot of glasses.

"I don't think I'll take anny of it, Terry," said Dan.

"Strong drink is injurious to the brain," said Mr. Burns, the poet, "and I beg that you will excuse my indulging," and he struck a new Delsarte attitude.

"I are got a rocky old skate on me just now, Mul," said the Hon. Mike, "and if I take any more I'll go ter seein' green dogs

wid pink legs and bells in deir ears, so I guess I won't."

Mr. Edward Geoghegan also begged to be excused from drinking anything just then.

"Have yez all turned timperance all av a sudden?" asked Muldoon, pulling out the cork, which came without much trouble. "What ails yez'all? Major, ye're not goin' back on a frind, who axes yer to hov' a dhrink, are yez?"

"No, sah, nevah—I always drink—hem! with a friend, of co'se."

The Hon. Mike retired to a corner and kicked himself; Dan made faces at the Major, and Mr. Burns beckoned him not to drink.

Muldoon tilted up the demijohn and poured out two portions, one for himself and one for the Major.

Nibbsey looked on with a big grin on his face.

Up went the glasses and down went the contents.

"April fool!" cried Dan, Mike, Mr. Burns and Edward Geoghegan.

"For why?" asked Muldoon.

"For the stuff ye've been dhrinkin'. That isn't whisky at all."

"Faix it is thin, and good whisky, too. Didn't yez find it so, Major?"

"Yes, sah, I did, sah, and yo' have my kind regahds, sah."

Then Nibbsey spoke up.

"Youse ducks," nodding at Dan and the rest, "tort it was very funny to pour out de boss's lick, didn't youse, and fill up de jug wid tar, didn't youse? Well, dat's de whisky jug and de tar jug is somewhere's else. See? Dere ain't no flies on me nibbs, Whiskers. See?"

"Guess I'll take a drink wid yer after all, Mul," said Mike.

"No, yez don't," said Muldoon. "Ye said ye would not, and I'm blowed av I'll let yez make a liar av yersilf. It's no drink ye'll get the day."

"Go out and kick yerself some more, old Shoebrush," laughed Nibbsey. "Dis is de time yer got left, and de fust of April ain't a bit cold for de boss."

PART VIII.

MULDOON had his flats full of people by this time, and, with the exception of the gang, his tenants were all good pay.

"Maybe av they didn't live an me this way, they'd do it some other way," he remarked to himself, philosophically, "and there's nothing gained in kicking. Thim suckers air bound to fasten thimsilves an me a part av the time, no matter phwat I do to shake thim aff, until neow I'm getting hardened to it."

The gang did not cause him all the trouble he had, however, for the women of the flats continued to make it warm for him at frequent intervals.

They were always kicking.

Sometimes it was one and then another. Then, to vary matters, they all took a hack at it at once.

Sometimes it was the signora, and sometimes it was the German woman.

The prime cake-taker for getting up disturbances, however, was Madam Finnegan.

That daughter of hers was still practicing for the stage, and the racket she made at times was something terrible.

If anybody kicked, however, Mrs. Finnegan made it warm for them, and you would have thought she owned the house by the airs that she gave herself on such occasions.

She hated Muldoon worse than anybody in the house, and was always making trouble for him, the fact of his being Irish, like herself, seeming to be no palliation of his offense of being her landlord.

"Thim American Irish are no good," she said to Nibbsey, one day in the cellar, in confidence. "I can stand the ould country Irish, but min like that ba'd-headed ould gorilla make me tired."

"Ah, go take a walk, Finnegan," said Redhead. "De boss was born in Ireland, same as you. Didn't I see de place where he fust hollered, when we was over dere, last summer? What's bitin' yer, anyhow?"

"Thin why didn't he stay there?" snort-

ed Finnegan, whom nothing could please.

"We have furriners enough."

"Wot fetched you over yerself?" asked the unabashed youth. "Who imported you, anyhow, Finnegan? Guess de duty on terriers wasn't high at dat time, was it?"

"Go an, ye little red-headed whipper-snapper, or I'll belt the lung out av yez!" snorted Madam Finnegan, making a pass at the cheeky youth.

The latter avoided the crack and skipped out, singing:

"Tarara-boom-de ay!
Tarara-boom-de ay!
Go sit on a tack
Till your face gets black,
Tarara-boom—"

"I'll give ye the tarara-boom if I get howld av yel!" cried the irate Finnegan, shaking her fist.

"Yes, yer will, but yer haven't got hold of me yet. See?"

"She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau,
She's my Finnegan, I'm her—"

Finnegan threw a lump of coal at him, and his song was suddenly cut short.

That lump of coal brings me to an incident that happened in Muldoon's career as janitor and landlord just about this time.

He supplied the coal used in the ranges, and just now he laid in a fresh stock.

Coal being down at that time, he laid in a lot of it—enough to nearly fill the vault under the sidewalk.

It came up so near to the top, in fact, that the chain securing the coal-hole cover could not be fastened down, or at any rate, it had not been.

The next day he had a row with Finnegan.

That is to say, she started it, but there were several others in it.

Mrs. Piscatelli, old woman Schumacher, the French lady, the major's wife, Mrs. Burns and Dan's old girl, were all in it as well as Madam Finnegan.

It was along in the afternoon, and Muldoon was in his office smoking a cigar in peace and quietness, when there came a rap at the door leading to the cellar.

It was none of your gentle raps, either, but a regular bang, and it made Muldoon jump.

"Come in!" he bawled, taking his feet down from the desk.

In marched seven angry women, Madam Finnegan in the lead.

"Get onto de old hens," murmured Nibbsey, who was sweeping up the dust over in one corner.

Muldoon felt somewhat alarmed at seeing all those women come in at once, but he arose politely and said in his suavest tones:

"Good-day to yez, ladies. To what am I indebted for the honor av this visit?"

Then they all got at him at once.

"For why you didn't sent up my coal dis morgen?"

"Why you noa takea down de ash, Irisha loaf?"

"Have I got to have me pail av garbage standip' on the ilevator all day?"

"Why don't you turn them Irishwomen out?"

"Ye niver sint up me receipt for the month's rint," said Mrs. Mamie Fresh Burns.

"For why would I?" asked Muldoon, "whin I haven't been paid a cint yet?"

"That's all right. Burns will pay you when he gets the receipt."

"Nevera minda data woman," said the signora. "You takea down de ash, or mya man he breaka you head."

"Plague take ye and the ashes!" cried Muldoon. "To the devil wid ye all! Go'n out av this, or I'll turn the hose an ye!"

Patience had ceased to be a virtue, and Muldoon was very mad.

He took a bad time to show his feelings, however.

It would have been better if he had waited till he was outside.

The seven women gave one howl and advanced upon him.

Then each produced a concealed weapon, which she had had under her apron.

Signora Piscatelli had a rolling-pin of great size.

Mrs. Finnegan produced an iron frying-pan with a hole in it.

Dan's wife brought out half of a broom—the business half, by the way.

The major's consort was armed with an old army boot.

The French lady had provided herself with a ham bone.

The lady from Germany showed a cane, and Mrs. Burns an umbrella.

Then the whole mob of them started for Muldoon.

"Killa de Irish loafer, breaka de head!" "I'll not be insulted be anny bald-headed Mick!"

"It's me rights I'll have, so I will!"

"Better we put him oud once, ain't it?"

Nibbsey dusted, seeing that there was go-

The latter was within six feet of the hole when the cover suddenly shot off and Muldoon's head and shoulders came in sight.

Perhaps it was Muldoon's face that the dog did not like, or maybe it was his sudden coming up that rattled him.

At all events he did not seem at all pleased.

He showed his teeth, growled and made a dead set at Muldoon.

His master tightened his grip on the chain fastened to his collar and tried to hold him back.

This was no fool of a job, for the dog was big and strong, and seemed determined to get at poor Muldoon.

doon got in a cold sweat, and a crowd collected.

No one cared to get between Muldoon and the dog, however.

They would rather look on and give advice than do that.

"Howld him in or he'll chew the nose aff me!" cried Muldoon. "Howld him in till I get out av this. I daren't go back."

Just then the women below began to pelt coal at his exposed legs.

If they could not get at him in one way they would try another.

It was a good thing that women are poor shots. If they had not been, Muldoon would have received a fine pelting.



"Grr-urr-rugh!" remarked that bull-dog, tugging at his chain. "Lie down, you brute!" cried his master, trying to hold him back. "Howld on to him till I get up," cried Muldoon. "Av that chain iver breaks I'll be tore to bits, be heavens!"

ing to be war, and Muldoon looked toward the door.

The women made a break for him, and he dove under the desk and out on the other side, there being fortunately no back partition.

He was on his feet in an instant and making for the door.

Out of the office he flew, and all those women after him.

He made a dive for the first door he saw.

It ought to have been the door leading to the street.

Unfortunately, however, it was not.

It was the door of the coal vault.

However, there was no time to back out now.

Those seven angry women were right behind him and he could not go back.

He ran up the coal, which sloped down to the door, till he reached the top.

The cover over the sidewalk was off in a jiffy and Muldoon popped out.

Before he could climb out of the hole, however, something happened.

It chanced that just as Muldoon made his sudden appearance in the outer world, there came along a man leading a big bull-dog.

The latter's hair stood up till it nearly took his hat off.

"Howly sailor! which way shall I go?" he muttered. "If I stay here I'll have me head chewed off, and av I go down I'll get it clubbed off."

"Grr-urr-rugh!" remarked that bull-dog, tugging at his chain.

"Lie down, you brute!" cried his master, trying to hold him back.

"Howld on to him till I get up," cried Muldoon. "Av that chain iver breaks I'll be tore to bits, be heavens!"

There seemed to be an objection to his getting out, however.

The dog, by pulling and tugging, had got to within a foot of Muldoon's head.

When the latter tried to raise himself he growled and looked wicked and tried to stretch himself an inch or two.

"Come back here!" cried the man, pulling at the chain.

"Grr-urr-rugh!" answered the bull-dog, tugging all the more.

"Be heavens, I'm in a fix!" cried Muldoon. "Av I go down I'll be kilt, and av I stay here I'll be chewed up."

The dog growled, the man tugged, Mul-

Two or three big lumps of coal hit him on the shins, however.

That made him dance, and the coal began to slip under his feet.

His bobbing up and down made the dog madder than ever.

The ugly brute tried the best he knew how to get at Muldoon.

"Here, here—some of you gillies give me a lift," gasped the man, getting red in the face.

That was safe enough to do, and two or three men grabbed the chain.

The dog was drawn back a foot or so, although he did not like it the least bit.

The coal began to fly thick and fast down below.

One big lump hit Muldoon in the small of the back.

He gave a yell and jumped up, and in a jiffy he was out of the hole.

Just then the bull-dog gave a more ferocious tug at the chain.

One of the links snapped in two and he was free.

He plunged forward in spite of himself. He didn't get hold of Muldoon, for all that.

Instead, he dove down the coal hole all in a heap.

Amid the rattling of the shifting coal and the startled howls of the dog you could now hear the shrieks of the women.

When that dog came rolling down the coal towards them they all set up a howl and started for the door.

If they had not been in such a hurry they

The latter alternative was suddenly forced upon her.

The four women suddenly found themselves tightly wedged in the doorway.

The others, having a mortal dread of the dog, tried to get through, in spite of the wedge.

This only made matters ten times worse.

"Get out av the way and let me pass, ye ould hin!" said Finnegan.

all the fuss. Shthand aside and let your betthers pass!"

Irish, German, Italian, French, United States and dog-talk were now all mixed up together, until the whole thing discounted the Tower of Babel racket all out and beat it by forty points.

Finally, Mrs. Schumacher, her gown nearly ripped off her back, was shot or



Muldoon made a dash for the window, opened it and made for the fire-escape.

He was bare-headed, but he never let go of those four aces. After him, as he hurried down the ladder, came Mike, with the beer.

More than half of it was dumped on Muldoon's head.

could all have got out of the vault easily enough.

In fact, they could have gone out two abreast if they had not been rattled.

Mrs. Piscatelli, the Dutch woman, the French lady and Madam Finnegan all made a simultaneous break for that door.

It was the Irish lady that boxed the thing up.

If she had held back the others might have gone through.

Me Lady Finnegan was not that sort, however.

She was bound to go first or not at all.

"You no shove you head in mein eye once, verdamter Irish!" sputtered Frau Schumacher.

"Takea away youra arm, no shovea so mucha."

"Ah, mon Dieu, je-suis tue, je-suis mort."

"Who are yez callin' mortar, yez garlic-atin' Frinch frog? Shtop yer pushing and let me get out!"

"Ach, donnerwetter! more better you stopped shoving youself once, ain't it, und den ve vas got out?"

"Don't talk to me, ye ignor'nt Dutch lump av sourkrout. It's ye that's making

squeezed through the doorway and the others quickly followed.

They all made a bolt for their respective apartments, never stopping to discuss the matter further.

As for the bull-dog he was found half an hour later, crouching in the remotest corner of the cellar, half scared to death.

Those women had rattled him worse than he had feared them and he was away like a kitten.

As for Muldoon, when he saw the comical aspect of the dog, he felt like kicking himself all around the block and bay

"I'll bet tin dollars that the baste wor afeared av me in the forst place, and wanted to get away from me," he muttered, "and av I hadn't been such a dom idjut, I'd uv known it fust off."

However, the incident had one good effect if no other.

Those women didn't bother Muldoon again for a whole week.

Just about this time, or not long afterwards, Roger got off another good snap on his respected pa, which really deserves putting on record.

One afternoon, when Muldoon left the flats, he lighted a cigar, an invariable habit of his, and started towards home puffing like a steam-engine.

Three or four doors off he met Roger with a cigarette in his hand.

"Hallo, pop!" said that frisky young man. "Going home? Give me a light, can't you?"

Muldoon looked at the cigarette, shook his head and said:

"Faix, I'll not have the scint av that bit av incipient insanity left on me cigar, av I can help it. Here, take a match."

With that he passed over a little silver match-box for Roger to take a light from.

"Thanks," said the young fellow, lighting up. "Ta, ta, governor, I've got to go across town before dinner. See you later."

Then away he went with Muldoon's match-box in his inside pocket.

On the corner Muldoon met the Major with a weary looking cigar in his hand.

That cigar never paid any duty, simply because it was made of the cheapest and poorest Connecticut tobacco, and was worth about one cent, retail.

"Ah, senatah, will yo' oblige me with a light?" asked the Major.

Muldoon looked at the old veteran's cigar and then felt in his pocket for a match.

Roger had cleaned him out, however, and so he very reluctantly passed his choice cigar over to the Major, that the latter might light his stinker thereat.

Roger's plan assumed a change of base at this moment, either because the Major knew enough to hang onto a good thing when he had it, or because of his absent-mindedness.

Maybe it was the latter, but at any rate, the Major handed the weary cigar to Muldoon and walked off with the good one in his mouth.

Muldoon did not discover this until he had taken three puffs, and by that time the gallant old war-horse had disappeared.

"Howly fiddler, what a stinker!" he vociferated, casting the malodorous weed into the street. "Be heavens, I believe the Major must have picked that up in a morgue! It's enough to give the mon the plague."

Half way down the block he suddenly came upon Dan.

"Have yez a light, Terry?" said his brother, holding up a cigar.

"I have not," said Muldoon, producing one of his own choice regalias. "Haven't yez a match yerself?"

Here is where the plan went a little adrift, but Dan happened to be provided against an emergency of this sort.

"Oh, begorra, I believe I hov," he said, going through his waist-coat pocket and handing his brother the illuminator.

Muldoon lighted up and threw the match away, when Dan suddenly exclaimed:

"Howld on, don't throw it away! Faix, ye've done it and that wor the only wan I had. Give us a light."

"Ye'd better have a cigar wid me," said Muldoon, looking sadly at the queer cigar in Dan's hand. "Av I let yez take a light from me wid that thing, I'd have to call an ambulance."

Dan got a good cigar and a light, put the castaway in his pocket, and said:

"Oh, that's not so bad. It's betther nor it looks, Terry."

"Maybe it is, Dan, but min have been hanged on their appearances, and the luck av that thing wor enough to condemn it, be heavens!"

Dan went toward the flat, and Muldoon toward home, and on the next corner he met the Hon. Mike Growler, with a butt in his fist.

"Hallo, Mul, old sport, give us a light," said the Nevada lily. "Shoot me if I are got a single blessed match, and I ain't goin' to throw dis good butt away, not if I know it."

"May I be pulverized av I give that ould bum wan av me three-for-a-dollar reinas," thought Muldoon. "Why don't he carry matches?"

The poor man had to give Mike a light, and his cigar took on a rank taste from that moment.

On the next block he met Mr. Burns, and that melancholy gentleman also had a cigar which he wished to light, and was without the wherewithal to do so.

"Ah, my esteemed friend, could I beg a small portion of fire?" he asked, with a fine, Delsartean flourish.

If Muldoon was not furnishing cigars to Mr. Growler, still less so was he doing similar to Mr. Burns, the poet.

Once more the cigar was passed over and now it had an added flavor and not a pleasant one.

Moreover, it was beginning to lose its trim and elegant shape from being so frequently handled.

Muldoon went on and at the end of another square he came upon Edward Geoghegan, with a pipe in his mouth.

"Hallo, Mul, old man, how goes it?" was the walking delegate's salutation. "Give us a light. I ain't got a blooming match about me."

Muldoon passed his cigar to Mr. Geoghegan with a sigh.

It was a sight when he got it again.

The end was pressed flat and the wrapper was cracked.

As he neared his own house, a block or two further on, he met Mulcahey, his old neighbor down-town.

The boarding-house keeper was very glad to see his old friend.

"Hello, Mully, me bye!" he said, effusively. "I wor up to yer place just now, and the ould woman said yez wor out. Come and have something. Give me a light first, will yez?"

Muldoon passed his mangled cigar to Mulcahey, and groaned.

When it came back it was a wreck.

"Be heavens, that's a foine cigar to hand a man back!" he sputtered, dashing the butt spitefully upon the pavement. "The ould woman said I wor out, did she? Yis, and begorry I'm always out to ye, Mulcahey, and to the rest av the gang. None av yez has the price av a box av matches about ye. Here, take tin cints and go and buy some."

Mulcahey laughed, and Muldoon went into the house, tearing mad, and never tumbling to the snap Roger had played upon him.

"Faix, the next time I go out wid a cigar in me mouth," he said, "I'll carry wan av thim peddlers' trays av matches fastened around me neck, so that thim suckers can help thimselves, be heavens!"

PART IX.

ALTHOUGH Muldoon did not live in the flats, he sometimes went around there of an evening to see Mike or some of the gang, and to have a quiet little game of draw.

His wife would not have the gang in her house, and Roger's wife was also down on them, to say nothing of Roger himself.

Consequently, when Muldoon wanted to have a game of poker, which frequently happened, he went around to Mike's apartments and indulged.

On one of these occasions there were present the Hon. Mike, Dan, Mr. Burns and Muldoon—just a quiet little party of four.

"How much is the ante?" asked Muldoon, as he sat down.

"I don't care how much yer make it," said the Hon. Mike. "I'm a nervy old soldier, I am, and I never weaken. Make it a nickel or a dollar, it's all der same."

"Phwat's the matther wid makin' it five cints and a quarter limit?" put in Dan. "Sure, that's the way we do always play."

"It is never good to disturb prevailing customs," remarked Mr. Burns, with a relaxed energy movement of the wrist, which indicated the busted-up condition of things which would result from any change.

"That's all right, thin," said Muldoon,

lighting a cigar, but refraining from passing them around.

The game was played in Mr. Growler's kitchen, Mrs. G—having some ladies to entertain in the sitting-room. Romeo and Evangeline Growler had not gone to bed, as they should have done long before this.

Vangie stayed in the parlor to hear the gossip, but Romeo presently made himself conspicuous among the players in the rear.

The game was proceeding nicely, all hands had anteed and drawn and the betting was just setting in.

"I'll go five cents on me hand," said Dan, who had three kings and a little deuce.

"Go yer five better," said Mike; "I got lots o' sportin' blood in me, I are, and I don't weaken fur no nickel, you bet yer life."

"I'll see yez and go yez tin betther, be heavens," said Muldoon, who had three queens.

"Oh, looker de ladies!" cried young Romeo, who came behind Muldoon at that moment. "Say, Baldy, why didn't yer have all ladies? You only got tree o' dem."

"Go an eout o' this and kape yer ugly mouth shut," cried Muldoon. "Yez orter be in bed."

The others laughed and then that young terror retorted:

"Ah, go on, yer old gorilla. Uncle Dan has got better cards 'n you have. He's got three men in his pack, and pop says men is better 'n ladies any day, and one of 'em's got a sword in—"

Dan flushed up to the roots of his hair, while Muldoon laughed and said:

"Faix, I'm glad I knowed yez had kings before I bet anny higher agin yez."

"The pot is mine, annyhow," said Dan, spreading out his cards.

"No, it's not!" said Muldoon. "Hippocrates Burns hasn't shown up yet."

"Dealer cards over and let the pot stay dere," said the Hon. Mike. "Looker here, young feller," to his son, "yer better skip, if yer know wot's good fur yer—see?"

"Naw, I won't!"

"Get a move on yer putty sudden, I tell yer, or I'll warm yer like yer been sittin' on der stove."

"Naw, I won't!" growled the terror. "Me mudder said I could come in here and see youse ducks play cards. I do' wanter stay in dere wid dem old hens."

"Then yer wanter keep yer face closed," said Mr. Growler. "You know me, Petey, and when I say a ting it goes—recollect?"

The young Romeo went over in a corner and sulked, and the cards were shuffled and dealt around again.

"Av that young sucker gives away me hand again, be heavens, I'll paralyze him!" muttered Muldoon, with bated breath, as he saw the ace of clubs come up.

Once more the betting began, and Muldoon had a cinch, or thought he had.

"Tin cints!" said Mr. Burns, with three sevens and a pair of queens.

"Tin better!" responded Dan, who had also two queens, but had eights, where Mr. Burns had only sevens.

"Fifteen better!" said the Hon. Mike, with a full hand, kings leading. "I'm a howler from der hills, I am, and der pot's mine!"

"Twenty-five cints, and kape your howling for some other time!" said Muldoon.

"I'm out," said Mr. Burns.

"So'm I," said Dan.

Young Romeo was around again.

"I believe yer are bluffin' me, yer old jay," said the Hon. Mike. "I'll go a quarter better meself."

Muldoon had been holding his cards shut up, but now, in his excitement, he looked at them, to make sure that he had not made a mistake.

"Oh, I'm bluffing yez, am I? Well, thin, I'll see that quarter, and go yez—"

Just then Master Growler broke out again.

"Get onter de funny cards what Muldoon's got!" he piped. "Dey're all one and two cards. Dem ain't no good."

Muldoon slammed his cards down on the table and arose in great wrath.

He made a swipe at young Growler, but that juvenile terror ducked and ran.

"Ha, rats! Never touched me!" he chuckled.

"Be heavens, Mike Growler, av yez

don't sınd that crooked-faced, wide-mouthed brat av yours away, there'll be murder!"

"Ha, ha, it ain't so funny now, is it, Terry?" laughed Dan.

"Adolescent youths require a vastly greater amount of somnolence than adults," said Mr. Burns, "and it is very pernicious to the health to allow juveniles to—"

"All av which means that the young divil ought to be in bed," said Muldoon. "Go an out av this, ye misfit monkey, or I'll break yer jaw!"

"Naw, yer won't! Dis ain't your house."

"It isn't—isn't it?"

"Naw, it's me pop's."

"Since whin?"

"Find out, old monkey-face," retorted the unterrified scion of Growler's.

"Begorry, Mike, av yez don't sınd that bye out I'll trow up the game."

"I won't go fur none o' youse," pouted the obstinate urchin. "Me mudder told me I could stay here. She's de boss here, I guess."

"Looker here, young feller, yer gotter keep yer lip buttoned down if yer stay here," said Mr. Growler.

"Be heavens, I wouldn't argify wid um at all," sputtered Muldoon. "Av Roger had iver given me lip like thot, the daisies wud be growin' above his grave be this time."

"Take yer fut to the brat," suggested Dan. "Sure, how can we play wid an informer like that hangin' 'round?"

"Shake a foot, young feller, and mosey out o' this," said Mike. "I'm talkin' business, understand?"

"Now, I won't."

Mike got up and Romeo fled in terror.

"Deal de cards," said the statesman, as he locked the door and sat down.

The pot still remained on the table and Mr. Burns won it.

"Just me luck," muttered Muldoon. "That young sucker hoodooed me. I didn't have even a pair that time."

Dan Muldoon got the next pot and the following one, and then the poet raked in the shekels, and after that the Nevada Lily entwined its petals around a little sixty cent stake and seemed quite happy.

"Be heavens, I've got to do something to change me luck," muttered Muldoon. "Will yez have a cigar, me madhouse rhyme jingler?"

Mr. Burns accepted the weed with thanks, and lighted up after his friend.

"That cigar proved to be a hoodoo to the poetical Mr. Burns."

In two hands he lost all that he had won and half his original stake.

The next hand cleaned him out completely.

"Oh, by the way," he said, suddenly, "I forgot all about the meeting of the Hibernian Lit'ry Society. I have to read them one of me pomes."

When Mr. Burns was excited, he dropped into the brogue, his ordinary speech being free of it.

Up he jumped, grabbed his hat, flew out of the kitchen and was gone.

"Now we'll get better hands," said Dan, giving the cards a good shuffling.

His hand on that round was so good that he lost fifty cents on it.

On the next round he lost a quarter and Muldoon, who had been raking in the pots right along, offered him a cigar.

"I don't think I'd better," he said, reluctantly. "That cigar ye gav' Burns made him bad luck."

"Yis, I noticed that he remimbered his app'intment whin his money was all gon'."

"I'm a gay old hoodoo killer myself, I am," said the Hon. Mike, "and I won't go under a ladder or walk through a graveyard at night or cut me nails on Friday, but if yer think yer can queer me wid any of yer cheroots, just try me once. I ain't afraid o' dem. I'll take a dozen and hold my own wid all o' yer."

"Yez have no takers, Mike," said Muldoon. "Thim cigars cost too much."

The game went on, Muldoon sometimes winning and again losing, Mike seeming to hold his own.

Dan was the low man, however, and, all at once, after a hand on which he had bet all his pile, thinking it a good one and then

being beaten by four little twos, he sprang up, exclaiming:

"Oh, murther! I've forgotten to pay me jues to the insurance soci'ty I belong to. There's not a moment to lose. They adjourn at tin and to-night's the last meeting night."

"There goes another one broke," chuckled Muldoon, as Dan disappeared. "Do yez mind how suddenly he remimbered the meeting?"

"I'm a roaring old catamount from der mountains, I am, and when I goes inter anything I stays dere and don't yer furget it," was the characteristic reply of Mr. Growler. "Let her go. Play der cards."

Just then young Romeo, the unterrified, came into the kitchen.

"Get out of this, ye dirty-faced image av bad luck, or be heavens I'll strangle yez," cried Muldoon.

"Ah, go change yer face, de one yer got is wore out," replied that tough young specimen.

"Begorry, yez're have to change the part ye sit down on av I get hold av yez, for I'll wear out either that or me fisht, be heavens!"

"Didn't I tell yer ter keep out o' here, young feller?" asked the Hon. Mike, with a leer.

"Me mudder wants to know if youse isn't a dry crowd. She ain't heard de growler go out once, she says."

"Here, thin, go get a pail and here's a quarther," said Muldoon. "Go an out and get some beer and don't come back till morning."

"Ah, ain't yer funny," said the little tough, as he went away.

"Faix, I don't blame that red-headed assistant down in th' offus for desiring to lick that kid av yours, Mike," said Muldoon. "I think that av I met him often there'd be crape on your dure bell, Mr. Growler."

"Mary Ann spoils der kid," said Mike. "Come on, let's play. What do yer say ter raising der ante, hey, old sport?"

"I'll call it a quarter av yez likes, and a dollar limit."

"Let her go."

They played for an hour longer with varying fortunes.

Sometimes Mike won, and then Muldoon raked in the boodle, and so it went.

Romey did not appear with the beer and they were not interrupted.

In fact, they forgot all about him, so interested were they in their little game. Finally, Muldoon got a hand that gave him great delight.

The Hon. Mike also had some pretty good cards, but they were not as good as Muldoon's.

The Solid Man had two aces to start with and a king, called for two cards to fill with, and got two more aces, making four in all.

"Half a dollar," he said, not wanting to frighten Mike.

"Go yer a quarter better."

Mike had a full house and was not going to weaken.

He did not want to frighten Muldoon, and so he bet easy.

"There's another quarter over yer, Mike."

"Go yer fifty better. Oh, I'm a stayer from Staytown, I am."

"There's yer fifty covered and another wan over it."

"I'm right up to time, I am, old sport. Go yer six shillin' better."

"There's yer six, thin, and there's six more."

"Oh, yer can't bluff me, Mul," laughed Mike. "You don't tink yer are goin' to take in dat pot, do yer?"

"Do yez want to call me?" replied Muldoon, quietly.

"Call nothin'! Dere's a dollar better. Oh, I'm right ter home on dis game, I are, and der higher der pile gits de more nerve I are got."

"Yer dollar is seen, Michael, me bye, and there's another."

"Well, I'll have ter go yer, but I hate to see a good man lose his money when I got a dead sure thing."

"Niver mind me, Mike. I can afford to lose. There's two more cases, wan to see yez and the other to go ahead av yez."

"Now I ain't gettin' bluffed fur a cent,

Mul," snorted the Hon. Mike. "Where der deuce is dat boy wid der can? Me bloomin' throat is as dry as a chip. Hi, Mrs. Growler! Mary Ann! hallo!"

"Niver mind, Mary Ann," said Muldoon. "It's yere turn to say something. Are yez goin' higher, or do yez call?"

The Nevada Lily shook its head sadly.

"Seems kinder too bad to take a feller's money when yer got a lead-pipe, double-fisted cinch like I are got," he murmured.

"Go an, man! what do yez say?" growled Muldoon, who was eager to rake in that pile of silver and greenbacks.

"It's a regular bloomin' shame to rope in a honest man like that. I'm a tender-hearted old cry baby, I am, and it makes me feel awful bad," continued Mike, shaking his head. "It do seem really—"

"Go an, ye big mouthed Western bluffer!" cried Muldoon, growing impatient. "Niver mind me at all, but go an wid the game. It's me opinion yez hov nothing, and ye're tryin' to face me down. Come now, do yez go me better or call me?"

Before the Nevada statesman could answer this very pertinent question of Muldoon's, that tough young Romeo Growler burst into the room, yelling out:

"Oh, mommer, de house is on fire down on de next—"

Mary Ann and the women with her shrieked and came rushing into the room.

Up jumped the Hon. Mike in a great hurry, and ran to the telegraph instrument which Muldoon furnished to all his flats.

In a brace of shakes he had rung up an alarm of fire.

"Howld an, howld an!" cried Muldoon, jumping up, but holding on to those four aces. "Is it this house that's on fire, me bye?"

"Yere, dere's a big fire down on de next—"

Some of the women ran into the hall, yelling at the tops of their voices:

"Fire, fire, the house is on fire!"

"Be heavens, I'll not lose sight av me four aces, annyhow," muttered Muldoon, as he jumped up and made for the window. The hall door was open, and into the room came a strong puff of smoke.

"Fire!" yelled somebody.

"Take the fire-escape, Mike," cried Muldoon, "it's safer than the stairs."

Mike was in his shirt sleeves and a big fright, and he grabbed up the first thing he saw.

It was the pail of beer that Romey had been so long in fetching.

Ding, dong, ding!

Clatter, clatter!

Fire, fire, fire, fire!

Muldoon made a dash for the window, opened it and made for the fire-escape.

He was bare-headed, but he never let go of those four aces.

After him, as he hurried down the ladder, came Mike, with the beer.

More than half of it was dumped on Muldoon's head, but that did not matter.

Ding, dong, ding!

Rattlely-bump-thump!

Fire, fire, fire!

There were others on the fire-escape besides Muldoon and Mike.

Finnegan, with his wife's best bonnet on his head and a clothes-wringer in his hand, came hurrying down from the fourth flat.

Mrs. Finnegan, in her night dress and a pair of rubber boots, followed.

Piscatelli, in his underclothes, and carrying a bird cage, his wife coming after him with a big trunk, and Rocco with an accordion, rushed out from the third.

Schumacher, in slippers and a blanket, and hugging a big feather bolster, came hurrying down from the top flat.

The old woman, in a big night-cap and short, red petticoat, was close behind, carrying a bundle of flat irons.

The noise increased every instant, both within and without.

Italians, Germans, Irish, French, Scandinavians and Yanks came hurrying down that ladder.

The noise of the engines, the shouts of the firemen, and the screams of the women made a fine hullabaloo.

Dan Muldoon, with his wife's sealskin sack on and a fishing rod in his hand, hurried out of the floor below Muldoon and got on the ladder first.

His wife, hugging her pug dog and wearing Dan's best high hat, came next.

The Growlers followed Mike, for the smoke in the hall gave them a fright, and they did not dare go down that way.

Mr. Burns, the poet, came out upon the ladder, hugging a big bundle of manuscript and carrying a water bucket on his head for a hat.

Muldoon met the foreman of one of the fire companies on the front stoop.

"There ain't no fire," said the man. "Who gave the alarm?"

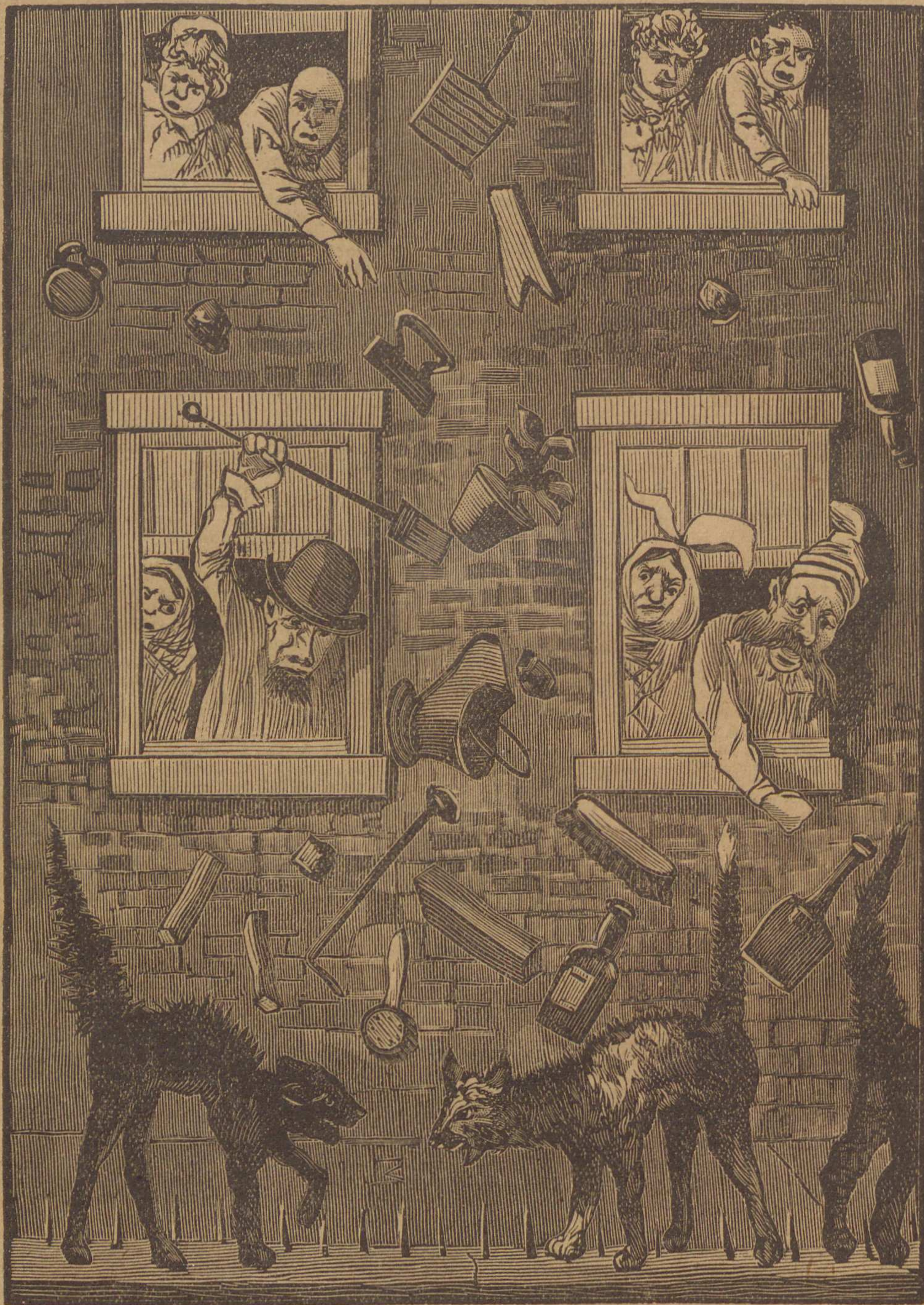
"Mike Growler," said Muldoon. "The flats are mine, and I wor visitin' um, whin the little bye come in and gave the forst alarram."

"Ah, I never!" snorted tough Romeo, who happened to be on hand.

"There! I smell it now!" yelled Mary Ann.

"Ah, you make me sick!" snorted the juvenile Growler. "Dat's only his jiglets' pipe; dat ain't nothin'. Say, Redney, where do yer pick up de butts yer smoke? Dat's de worst terbacker I ever seen."

The people in the flats went back to their apartments in disgust, Muldoon, still hanging on to those four



Then things began to fly at those fighting cats. First came a bootjack. A beer bottle followed and was all broke up on the fence. A shower of coal rattled on the walk and against the fence.

In all the noise and bustle Muldoon held tightly to those four aces.

"I'll have that pot aven if the house does burn down," he muttered, "and it's insured annyhow, so I can stand it."

Down the ladder went the frightened inmates of the flats, while the noise increased every moment.

At last they reached the yard and made a dash for the cellar.

By that time the firemen were in the house.

Not a sign of fire could they discover.

They went from cellar to roof and found nothing out of the way.

"Yis, yez did."

"I never did. I sayed dere was a fire on de next block below, and dat's what made me late wid de beer, and den pop got rattled and de old woman she hollered. I never sayed dey was a fire in our house, you old jay. See?"

"Thin where was the smoke?" cried Many Ann Growler, boxing Romey's ear.

The gallant Major came to the front at this moment.

He was smoking a big, black meer-schaum pipe, filled with the rankest and strongest tobacco.

aces, went back to the Growler flat and saw Mike sitting tipped back in a chair with his feet on the table, drinking the rest of the beer.

The stakes had disappeared.

"Come on, now, and finish the game," said Muldoon. "Do yez call me or go—Why, where's all the money?"

"Oh, raked in dat pot," said the Hon. Mike, quietly. "You had nothin', and so I scooped in der boodle."

"I had nothin', did I? What do you call something if that's nothing? That's what I had, and be heavens I'd like to see yez beat that hand!"

Then Muldoon laid down his precious four aces.

"There's me cards and I defy yez to show a better hand. Hand me over the money, Mike Growler."

The Lily of Nevada merely snorted.

"Dat's only a fake, Mul," he remarked. "You picked up dem cards from der floor when yer went out."

"Yer a liar, be heavens, and I can prove it, and av yez say that to me again, Mike Growler, I'll smash the whole ugly jaw av yez!"

Things began to look somewhat breezy in the Growler apartments.

Therefore, he concluded to try and bluff Muldoon.

"Yer picked up dem cards off der floor when der table was upset, dat's wot yer did," he said, sticking out his big mustache.

"Ye're a double distilled liar, Mike Growler," retorted Muldoon, "and for two pins I'd make Mary Ann a widdy."

The Hon. Mike felt the ground slipping from under his feet and realized that something must be done.

He took his feet from the table, got up, turned back his wristbands, spat on his hands and remarked, in a very wicked way:

"I'm a bad man from Kalamazoo, I am,

"Rats!" said Muldoon. "Do yez see thim four aces?"

"Yare, I ain't blind."

"Well, thin, that wor the hand I had just previous to the alarrum, and I believe now it wor a put-up job. I won the pot and av I don't get it, be heavens, I'll trow yez down the fire-escape head first!"

Muldoon meant every word of it, and Mike knew that he did.

Then he tried to crawl.

"I donno how much it was," he said.

"Give me all the money yez hov, then, and I'll call it square."

Here Mrs. Growler interfered.

She had been listening and was now greatly interested.



Everybody was listening with the greatest attention. You could almost hear a man's eyelash fall on the floor. Muldoon swelled out his chest, looked as lovesick as he could, thumped his shirt front hard with his fist and let go.

PART X.

MULDOON was not going to be bluffed out of the money that he had won by those four aces if he knew it.

He was not the least bit afraid of the Hon. Mike Growler, for he had long ago found out what a big stuff and monumental blower the Western statesman was.

The Hon. Mike Growler had appropriated the stakes which rightfully belonged to Muldoon during the interim between the quieting of the confusion consequent upon the alarm of fire and the Solid Man's return.

Mr. Growler was tolerably sure that Muldoon held a better hand than he did, but he didn't reckon on the former returning his cards.

After all, it wasn't so much the money that Muldoon cared about.

He was rich enough to stand a loss ten times as great and never feel it.

It was the idea of being chiseled out of what was his by right that galled him.

The money did make a difference to Mr. Growler, however, and a big one.

He didn't intend to give it up if he could get out of it.

and when I get mad der undertakers have plenty o' jobs. Yer don't want ter rile me, fur when I'm stirred up I'm nasty. See?"

"I don't care where yez come from, ye're no good," sputtered Muldoon.

"Yer called me a liar."

"I did."

"Well, yer want ter take it back."

"Take back nothin'. Ye're no good."

"Dat's another insult."

"Go an, ye wind-bag, I can't insult ye."

Mr. Growler swaggered forward a step or two and then said:

"I don't wanter hurt yer, Mul, 'cos me and you's been pards."

"Ye're a liar, we never wor."

"Dat makes anoder time ye've called me that."

"Yis, and I'll do it again, be heavens, and afther that I'll call yez a bow-legged misfit and a beetle-browed hoodoo, and a natheral gas well from Liartown, and a big stuff."

"Yer don't wanter get me mad, I tell you," said Mike, trying to look bad, "for when I get mad I'm wicked. Der Lily of Nevada grows best in der grave-yard, so yer wanter look out."

She didn't want Muldoon to get that money if she could help it.

On the contrary, she meant to go through Mike's clothes when he was asleep and take it herself.

Out she came in a great hurry, and began in a high key:

"Shame an ye, Terry, to come here and injuse me husband to gamble, and play cards and then rob um. It's takin' the bread and butter out av me childers' mouths ye are."

"Oho, wud yez hear that now?" laughed Muldoon. "More likely ye're robbin' me. What are ye but a lot of squatters that pay no rint and soaks me ivery chance ye get? The money's mine, and I'm goin' ter have it, av I have to break that sucker's neck to get it, be heavens!"

Just then in came Mrs. Dan Muldoon with blood in her eye.

She was a termagant of the first class and could talk as fast as a steam engine.

"You'd orter be shamed of yourself, you Irish Mick, to teach my husband to play cards and win all his money away, and you ever so rich and we just starving for the bare necessities of life, but it's just like you Irish, you haven't got no principle

and never did have and I'll just thank you to pay over—"

"Howly mackerell! are yez wound up for thirty-six hours or the whole week?" gasped Muldoon, his hands to his ears.

Just then in sailed the wife of the poet, and in rasping, Fourth Ward accents, asked:

"Say, don't you think you're got a gall to lead my husband astray and cheat him out of all his money, without raising such a circus and keeping all them poor dear babies awake all night? You're just an old slouch, that's what you are, and I'd slap your face for you if I was a man, you—"

"Faix, this is worse, and more av it," groaned Muldoon, and then all three women got at him at once, all talking like a streak of greased lightning.

Then down came Mrs. Finnegan and wanted to know if they didn't think there was anybody in the house but themselves, and why couldn't they go to bed like Christians and let people sleep.

In the midst of her harangue in sailed the Signora Piscatelli, with a quiet request for them all to shut up and go to bed or she'd know the reason.

On top of this, and while Mrs. Piscatelli was still speaking, there arrived Frau Schumacher, Madam Dubois, Mrs. Buster, Mary Jane Finnegan, the serio comic, Mademoiselle Dubois and three or four other women, all talking as if their very lives, fortunes and future salvation depended upon it.

That was more than Muldoon could stand.

Nearly deafened and driven quite distracted, he made a break for the door, grabbed a hat belonging to Mr. Growler and escaped.

He didn't get the stakes, but he left the four aces behind him, to show that they belonged to him.

Then the company dispersed and, a few minutes thereafter, the lights were out and calmness rested upon the flats.

"Faix, that's the last time I'll go there," remarked Muldoon, when he reached home. "They're all a lot av suckers, and av thim flats could burn down and nobody be hurted, it wud be the best thing that could happen me, be heavens!"

For two or three days thereafter Nibbsey ran those flats to suit himself, for Muldoon did not go near them.

That red-headed youth was supposed to sleep at Muldoon's, for he had been page boy at the Madison avenue house before the flats were opened, but he had a bed in the office, and slept in that as much as in the one at the house.

He was a lover of fun, that boy was, and he had made the acquaintance of four or five fellows just like him, and often, of a night, when Muldoon supposed he was in his bed, he and his cronies would be having high old times in the cellar or in the office till all hours.

One night, not long after the racket in the Hon. Mike's rooms, Nibbsey and his chums put up a job on the tenants, which was a regular corker for ingenuity and design and excellence of execution.

It was worked in some such style as this:

Back of the flats was a high fence, separating the yards from those of a row of houses on the next street.

Upon this fence there used at times to congregate a number of cats, who made the night melodious with their caterwauling.

Of late, however, Muldoon had put cat-teasers on top of the fence, likewise broken bottles and big spikes, making it an unsafe promenade for felines.

The people in the flats had not been troubled for some nights, therefore, with the wailing of Tommies and Tabbies.

The yards of the houses were longer than those of the flats, and consequently, Muldoon's tenants had a greater opportunity to listen to the feline concert than their neighbors across the way.

Having explained this much, we will now proceed to Nibbsey and his hoodlums.

Those young fellows raked and scraped and purloined and interviewed ash barrels and bought from second-hand shops a quantity of old fur, some stiff wire, a lot

of rags and paper, a sufficient number of nails, and enough twine to satisfy them, and then they went to work.

With the fur and the rags and the wire they constructed several stuffed figures, looking remarkably like cats by night.

Each cat had a long tail, and by an arrangement of wire and twine these caudal appendages could be made to stand straight up in the air or the reverse, at the will of the operator.

When the lights began to appear in the flats, Nibbsey got a short ladder from the cellar, and he and his chums got on the fence and fastened on half a dozen of their fake cats, nailing them securely.

Somewhat later on they dropped into the yard, opposite the flat, and got to work.

Suddenly the most awful caterwauling arose upon the air of night.

"Mierow-wow-row-rrr-eow!"

"Well-well-here's-a-reow!"

"Fft-spt-sss-meow!"

You can imagine the noise that six or seven boys were capable of making when they let themselves out.

They all had good lungs, and they used them to the best of their ability.

Such piercing screams were enough to wake the dead.

In a couple of minutes up flew a window in the flats.

"Scat! get out of that, you noisy beasts. Shoo!"

"Meow-meow!"

"Fft-siss-reow!"

Up went half a dozen tails, and those cats seemed to be having a fine old scraping match.

The moon was shining bright, and the cats were plainly visible.

Not so those bad boys, however.

The fence cast a deep shadow, and they were right in it.

"Miaow—oh, what a row!"

"You just go away, maow!"

"Well, well, well, how are you now!"

The racket was something terrible.

Up went more windows, and out came several heads.

"Go an eout av that, ye dirty vilyans!"

"Donnerwetter, vat a ragged already!"

"Chasea de cat, breaka de way, getta outa dat!"

"Ah, mon Dieu, quel bruit. Allez!"

"Merow!"

"Fft-ft-siss-meow!"

Then things began to fly at those fighting cats.

First came a bootjack.

A beer bottle followed and was all broke up on the fence.

A shower of coal rattled on the walk and against the fence.

A retired candlestick went sailing through the air next.

Then a box of blacking frisked along and struck one of the cats.

Several chunks of kindling wood then sailed toward those felines and peppered two or three.

The noise did not abate just a little.

Those rampant tails waved just as defiantly as ever.

The belligerent bruisers never left the fence.

Louder grew the racket and more fiercely waved the tails.

Nibbsey and his associate terrors were working that snap for all they knew.

There wasn't a window in the flats that wasn't open.

Loud and deep and many were the curses pronounced against those cats.

The shower of missiles grew thicker and more frequent.

There were beer bottles.

Bars of soap.

Pieces of coal.

Bits of kindling wood.

Unhealthy potatoes.

Tin cans of all kinds.

Old shoe brushes and busted brooms.

Fragments of old bones and rusty iron.

Ham bones and tired vegetables.

Likewise much bad language.

A dozen different tongues and dialects could be distinguished.

Through it all those cats held their own. Although hit many times, every one of them, not one went away.

Everything that could be conveniently

thrown at them found its way to the ground.

There was coal by the pailful, wood by the bundle, bottles by the dozen, potatoes by the bushel, and about everything else.

The people in the flats were not the only ones that were trying to silence the noisy grimalkins.

The residents opposite were fully as indignant as were the flatites.

Up flew windows and out came the heads.

Bald heads, red-heads, heads in night caps, ditto in curl papers, likewise tied up in flannel.

Young heads, old heads, rattle heads and sore heads, were all there.

"Scat, you beasts!"

"Much good those spikes do!"

"Just see them fight!"

"There won't be even their tails left when they get through!"

The people in the private houses also got to throwing things.

They threw cuspidors.

And coal scuttles.

Even fire shovels.

Also water pitchers.

Likewise dust pans.

Wood, coal and soap.

Gridirons and bootjacks.

Shaving cups and razor strops.

Tack hammers, ottomans, door mats and dusters.

Ink bottles, broken crockery, bottomless chairs, broken hobby-horses, barrel staves, butter tubs and pickle jars.

Washboards, rolling-pins, smoothing irons, curling tongs, kerosene oil cans, molasses jugs, sugar scoops, bread trays, butter molds, muffin rings, dinner bells, tea trays, carving knives and chopping bowls.

There were household goods enough scattered about those yards to supply twenty young couples just going to house-keeping.

The people in the houses had further to throw than the flatfers, and consequently, their aim was not so good.

The boys behind the fence got hit once or twice, but that was nothing.

The noise was kept up just the same and the fake cats went on fighting as if nothing had happened.

At last the Hon. Mike Growler got out his seven-shooter and began firing at the cats.

That made the fur fly.

Nibbsey and his cronies lay low at that.

The people in the houses got scared.

In went heads and down came sashes.

The cats ceased to caterwaul.

The Hon. Mike put up his gun.

"That settled 'em," he remarked.

"Yare, but dey're dere all de same," said Romeo Growler.

There was quiet for a time at all events.

"I ain't dead mashed on havin' dat big, mustacheed snoozer slugging me in de coop with a bullet," remarked Nibbsey. "He's too fresh, he is."

The windows in the flats were now closed and the occupants returned to their beds.

Then the cat concert began again.

Mike Growler fired another shot and then somebody said:

"See here, you'll get arrested if you don't look out."

The Lily of Nevada immediately faded.

Mr. Growler ducked in his head quicker than scat and went to bed.

There were no more shots fired after that.

"That old stuff is too frisky with his pop, anyhow," said Nibbsey. "We don't know if he's got blanks or if he ain't."

"Ah, he's too funny," said one of the gang. "We'll have ter fix him fur that."

Then the singing was renewed louder and fiercer than ever.

Now and then a window would open and a solitary missile would go flying at the cats, but only one at a time did the tenants make this sort of a protest and not in a body as before.

Occasionally Nibbsey and his crowd would take a rest and laugh over the fun they were having, and at such times the bruisers on the fence were quiet.

Then they would start in again, and the noise would be something frightful to think about.

"Mein Gott! off you don't go right avay off dot fence once I broke your jaw!" sputtered Schumacher on one of these occasions.

Then there was a crash and a splash, as though a pailful of water, pail and all had been thrown out.

The cats yelled louder than ever, and their tails stood up straight.

"Mein gootness! look off dot! Dose cats don'd mind dot no more as noding at all vonce."

"Meow-spt-ss!"

"Ach, gone mit der tuyvell!" sputtered Schumacher, bringing down the sash with a bang.

At last, however, having kept the thing up till midnight, Nibbsey concluded that he had had enough of that sort of fun, and so he proposed an adjournment.

After that the real cats came along and howled and yawled, but kept at a respectful distance from the faked felines, of whom they stood in apparent dread.

That auburn-haired youth of the flats did not don his patched trousers, blue checked jumper and one suspender until late the next morning.

In fact, he was not up and fixed until nearly time for Muldoon to make his appearance.

As the acting janitor came somewhat earlier than usual, Nibbsey really had no time to spare.

"Well, I take me oat' if de boss didn't nearly catch me dis morn," he muttered, hustling about and seeming to be terribly busy.

He never thought of those bogus cats on the back fence, and presently Muldoon went out for something.

"Howly fiddler! has there been a fire or an airthquake or phwativer has there been?" he exclaimed, when he struck the yard.

The place was littered with all sorts of things as though it had rained bottles, tomato cans, coal and wood.

Then Muldoon observed the cats.

"Go an out of this!" he cried, throwing up his hands.

Not a single puss budged.

"Get out, I tell ye, bad manners to the gang of yez!"

Those cats stayed just where they had been put.

Then Muldoon grabbed up a lump of coal and let drive.

It soaked the biggest bruiser right in the back.

He wobbled a bit, but after that resumed his old position.

"Troth, that's funny, too," muttered Muldoon, and then he went closer.

"Ivery wan av thim fakes!" he remarked.

"Somebody has been fooled be thim cats. Hi, Nibbsey, me bye, come here wanst!"

Out came Redhead in a hurry and a checked jumper.

"Gee! de boss has got onto de racket!" he muttered. "I orter tooken dem tings down before."

"Go get a bar'l and trow this coal in it," said Muldoon. "I can't have it wasted, aven av the folks up-stairs do be so reckless wid it."

"Gee, boss! look at de cats!" cried the boy, in great surprise. "Ain't dey got a cheek to come so near? Scat! get to blazes out o' this!"

Then that very sly youth picked up a lump of coal and threw it at one of the cats.

"Well, I take me oat', boss, dem cats is only stuffed."

"Yis, and it's me opinion that they air not the only wans that have been stuffed bechune last night and the mornin'."

Nibbsey went to work picking up the coal, singing softly to himself

"Not a single word was spoken
And dey put away de tokens
And de picter dat was turned—"

"Niver mind about the picter wid its face to the wall," said Muldoon. "Go an wid yer worruk."

Then he went back to the office, mentally musing:

"I'll bet two dollars and fifty cents that the young vilyan knows more about thim property cats thin he cares to tell. That's all right, he can fool the tinants all he don pleases, but av he works off anny of his gags an me I'll warrum hees jumper fur

um and his name will be Dinnis insthud av whatever it is, be heavens!"

PART XI.

THE spring was well started, the weather was pleasant, and things were as lovely as one could expect at Muldoon's Flats.

In fact, it was moving time, and none of Muldoon's tenants were going out.

They knew too well when they were in clover to do that.

The squatters certainly would not think of going without a dispossession warrant or a fire, and the paying tenants were quite satisfied to stay.

In short, as I have already remarked, things were going on lovely around at the flats.

They were rather more salubrious when Muldoon was away than when he was around—for him, at all events.

Nibbsey could be generally trusted to look after things, however, and Muldoon left more and more of the management of the place to him every day.

That red-headed youth was not being imposed upon very much by those tenants, even if his boss was, and he didn't care a rap for the whole gang.

"I'd fire de hull business if dey gave me any sass," he remarked to himself. "De boss is too soft hearted. If it was me, I'd let de tank on de roof bust an' flood dem out, or I'd put pepper in de furnace and choke 'em. Dey wouldn't get around me nibbs, and I c'n tell 'em dat straight."

One day the Hon. Mike Growler came down to the cellar when Muldoon was not there, and said:

"Hallo, me terra cotta tailed young chippie, where's der boss?"

"Wot yer want him fur, Whiskers?" asked Nibbsey.

"Never yer mind. Der Lily of Nevada never tells its secrets to bloomin' red-headed chumps. See? Where's der boss, I axed yer?"

"Ah, why don't you look, old Shoe-brush? Why don't yer lift de cover o' de coal box? Maybe ye'll find him in de ash ba'll. Why don't yer look around?"

"I'm a bad man from der Rockies, I am," sputtered Mr. Growler, "and when I—"

"Ah, yes, you're rocky enough, you are."

"I chew up scarlet-topped ducks like you, I do," continued the statesman.

"Yes, yer do!" snorted Nibbsey. "Chew-in' wittles and borried terbacker is all de chewin' you do, old Windy!"

That red-headed boy was evidently not being terrified worth mentioning.

"Well, Muldoon kinder likes yer, after all," muttered the old bluff, "and so I won't hurt yer, but yer needn't get so lip-py. Where's Mul?"

"Ah, how'd I know? He ain't here, is he?"

"Well, where is he?"

"Ah, I ain't no bloomin' fortune-teller, I ain't. I don't know where he is."

"Ain't he come down yet?"

"No, he hain't."

"Den I'll wait for him. I'm a stumped-tailed, one-eyed pussy-cat, I am, wid one ear chewed off, and I kin beat de gang on waitin'. I'll wait for his nibbs. I are got a whole stock o' patience, I are."

"'Bout all yer have got, I reckon," answered the untried. "Got a job yet, old Dime Novels?"

The Hon. Mike paid no attention to the implied sarcasm but sat down.

He took a seat at Muldoon's desk and began to rummage about in the drawers.

"Has der ole gorilla got any decent cigars in der place?" he presently asked.

"Yer'd orter know, old Hair Dye. You gin'ally smokes 'em."

"Yer want ter go slow with me, young feller," said Mike, looking tough. "I'm a icy old avalanche, I am, an' der fust ting yer know, I'll drop on yer."

"Yer better drop on yerself fust," retorted Nibbsey. "It's about time yer took a tumble to yerself. Say, did yer ever hear dis?"

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-ta—"

"Never yer mind yer ta-ra-ra, but listen ter my noise. Where does der old jay keep his cigars?"

"Where yer won't find 'em, I guess, old Buffler Bill."

"Oh, I won't, hey?" and Ned Growler suddenly pulled out a little drawer. "Oh, mama! get on dem! I'm a grizzly old trapper, I am, and I knows where ter find things. It's a cold day when der Lily of Nevada droops its leaves, young feller."

There were four or five cigars in that drawer.

Mr. Growler was not avaricious and so he left one in the drawer.

One he put in his mouth and the others in his pocket.

"Now, I guess I can wait," he remarked, in a satisfied tone.

"Yes, yer look like yer could," said Nibbsey. "So kin de Italians till de man put out de kags."

The Hon. Mike tipped his chair back, put his feet on the desk, lighted up and seemed perfectly contented.

"Takin' tings easy, ain't yer, old Pig Weed!" said Nibbsey.

"Yer bet yer life. Der Lily of Nevada don't let tings ruffle her leaves, you bet."

Then he began puffing away as if there were no other object in life.

Now that cigar was not one of Muldoon's best.

It looked all right, and the first taste was not so bad, but after that—well!

It did not take the Hon. Mike long to find out that something was wrong with that cheroot.

He looked across at Nibbsey, but that young fellow was like the sphinx.

You could not tell from his face what he was thinking about any more than if it had been wood.

Mr. Growler took a few more puffs and said nothing.

He was not enjoying himself as much as at first. In fact, the further he got the worse it was.

That cigar began to give him that tired feeling we hear about.

He took another puff and then groaned.

"Jumpin' coyotes, is dat der best cigar Mul kin smoke?" he said at last.

"Ah, go on, you ain't used ter good things, you ain't," said Nibbsey.

"Ugh! dat's der worst I ever struck," sputtered Mr. Growler, in disgust.

Then he fired the thing clear across the room.

"Gee! Mul wants ter get anoder brand if he wants me to smoke with him."

"Maybe he doesn't, Whiskers. How does that strike yer?" asked Nibbsey, with a chuckle.

For a few moments Mike said nothing.

Then an expression of sadness came over his classic features.

He grew somewhat whiter than was his wont and his mouth began to twitch.

Down came his feet from the desk and his chair resumed the perpendicular.

"Guess I'll go and meet Mul," he muttered, starting slowly toward the door.

Suddenly, however, his movements were greatly accelerated and he went out of that door and up the steps fairly flying.

In a few moments Muldoon came in.

"Wor that Mike Growler that passed me just now wid his hand over hees mouth?"

"Bet yer life, boss."

"What happened um? Wor he sick?"

"Now yer a-shoutin'! He just was."

"Had he been on a skate?"

"Nope, he smoked one o' yer cigars."

"One av mine, is it?"

"Well, he tort it was, but I say, boss?"

"Well?"

"I knowed him and I changed 'em. Don't smoke de one he left. Catch on?"

"Faix I do," chuckled Muldoon, "and it's a janius ye air."

It was not long after this last occurrence that Muldoon one day got an invitation to attend a dinner to be given in honor of some of his old political cronies.

At least that's what it was supposed to be, but Muldoon did not seem to remember the man's name.

"Faix, I don't think I knew anny Mac-Caffertys whin I war down-town," he remarked when he received the invitation.

The same had been handed to him by young Roger.

"Why, yes, you did, pop," said that young joker. "Mac went to Ireland to free the country, he also went to Albany, and was afterwards made minister to Okimbolo out in China."

"Why, yis, I suppose I ought to remember him, but—"

"And you lent him a hundred dollars, you know."

"Faix, there's a good manny that I've lint money to, me bye, and it's good care they take that I don't remember it, be heavens!"

"Well, this is to be a big affair, and you must go."

"Are ye going, Roger?"

"To be sure."

"Anny wan ilse I know?"

"Nearly all, I guess. There's Uncle Dan and the Major, Mr. Burns, the Alderman, Mr. Geoghegan, Mr. Bud—"

When they went out to dinner, Muldoon was not very much impressed.

He found himself in a long, narrow, low-ceiled room, a long table in the center, a plain carpet on the floor, and a dozen or so ordinary-looking pictures upon the bare walls.

There were also a few mottoes, such as "Our Honored Guest," "Eat Hearty," "Pass the Growler," and one or two others.

The table did not present that magnificent appearance which Muldoon had expected, and all the viands were set out in advance.

There was a big piece of corned beef, a pig's head, a ham, some cabbage, three or

"Give us a speech, Mul."

"Let's hear from the celebrated traveler, Terrence Muldoon."

"Hear, hear!"

"Come on, Muldoon, speak up like a man."

"Well, me frinds," said Muldoon, "this reception does me great honor, and fills me bosom wid pride, so it does, but I think that we should forst hear from the principal guest of the evening, the Hon. Mr. MacCafferty."

"We want to hear from you first, Muldoon," said a voice from the lower end of the table.

Muldoon did not recognize it, and in another minute there was a lot of noise.



The results of Muldoon's singing were most remarkable. First, all the pictures fell from the wall. Then all the chairs tumbled to pieces. Next the table, dishes and the whole business went to smash. Then the whole gang cleared out.

"Faix, the hull gang is going!" cried Muldoon, in disgust.

"Several of them will be there."

"Then I'll not go, be heavens!"

"Oh, but I have accepted for you and you can't back out. I'm going myself."

"Is Mike Growler going?"

"Well, I don't know exactly."

"If he goes, I won't, and that settles it. I'm sick av um."

"No; come to think of it, I think he will be unable to attend."

"All right then."

"On the whole it will be rather too select an occasion for him, and in fact I think we can freeze out Burns and Mulcahey, Budweiser, the Alderman and Edward Geoghegan."

"Faix, yez had betther av yez intind to make any sort av an affair av it at all, me bye," muttered Muldoon, somewhat mcliffed.

They were all there, just the same.

Muldoon did not see them until after his arrival.

He was togged out in full evening dress, with his hair curled and his sluggers perfumed, a big diamond in his shirt front and a rose in the button-hole of his coat.

four loaves of bread, and several bottles of beer.

"Faix, I don't think that's much av a dinner to put on a swally-tail coat for," remarked Muldoon to himself.

All hands were now in the room and the head waiter came forward and led the Solid Man to his seat.

It was at the head of the table.

"Faix, that's not right," said Muldoon.

"That's for MacCafferty."

"That's quite right, sir, quite right," said the man, almost pushing Muldoon into the chair.

Roger was half way down on one side, while next to Muldoon, on one side or the other were the Hon. Mike Growler, Dan Muldoon, the Alderman, Mr. Burns, the poet, Mr. Edward Geoghegan, Major Buster, Mulcahey, Budweiser, Billy McGuinness and others.

Muldoon was about the only man in evening dress present and he naturally shed great luster on the company.

Well, they all sat down, the waiters began to bustle about and the dinner began.

"Three cheers fur Muldoon!" suddenly cried the Hon. Mike, and there was a great thumping of glasses.

"Muldoon! Muldoon!"

"We want to hear Terry!"

"Speech! Speech!"

"Muldoon!"

In the face of this universal demonstration, what else could he do but comply?

The great man arose, rested his hands on the table and said:

"Gintlemin, frinds all: I did not come to-night wid the expectation of making a speech but av listening to wan, and I may say I am hardly prepared, in view av the circumstances, to aither inlightin, amuse or entertain yez in that line, and so I'm afeared yez'll hov' ter excuse—"

"Ah, dat won't do, Mul, old sport!" said Mr. Growler. "Yer can't go back on der gang-like dat!"

"Faix, no, Terry, yez mustn't disapp'int thim," put in Dan. "Go an—say something."

"Perhaps," said the solemn Mr. Burns, "if you have not any impromptu remarks ready to hand, you would recite something? We certainly cannot permit you to sit down without showing your ability in some way."

"Hear—hear!"

"Speak a piece, Mull!"

"Give us 'De boy stood on de burnin' deck,' or somethin', Mul!"

"Go on; let her go!"

"But, be heavens, I niver spoke a piece in me life and don't know anny," cried Muldoon.

"Den give us an imitation and keep der ball a-rollin', dat's der talk," said the Hon. Mike.

"Faix, I don't know anny."

"Well, yer can sing, can't yer?"

"Yis, I can, but—"

The whole gang interrupted him.

"Aha, now we have it!"

"Muldoon is going to sing."

"Hear—hear!"

"Silence in the court!"

"Mr. Muldoon will oblige."

"He will, he will!"

"Yis," said Muldoon, nervously, "I can sing to be sure, afther a fashion, but—"

"Ah, go on; you're all right."

"But there's only wan song I sing very well and that's—"

"Well, sing that one."

"Let her go, Terry."

"It's purty old and maybe some av yez might not care—"

"Just never you mind, Mul," said Mr. Growler, aggressively. "You go on and sing, and if any chump says a word I'll break his face—see?"

"Hear—hear!"

"That's the talk!"

"Go ahead and sing!"

"Silence in the court!"

"Well, thin, I'm goin' to sing 'Little Annie Rooney' for yez, gintlemen. It's the only song I know, and I've given yez all fair warnin'."

"That's all right."

"What's der matter wid dat?"

"Sure, that's a lovely song."

"Go on—sing away."

Muldoon cleared his throat, made a false start, got on too high a key and stopped.

"Fine!"

"Immense!"

"That's splendid!"

"Hould an, I'll do better this time," said Muldoon.

"He can't sing for nuthin', he can't!" he heard the Hon. Mike Growler say *sotto voce* to Dan.

That made him mad, and he was bound to sing the thing now, whether or no.

Off he started again, caught the key plumb, and went along finely.

He finished the first verse amid dead silence.

Then he attacked the chorus boldly.

"She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau,
She's my Annie, I'm her Joe,
Soon we'll marry, never to part,
Little Annie Rooney is my sweetheart."

Muldoon just let himself loose on that chorus.

He put one hand on his breast, beating time with the other and looking up to the chandelier.

His voice was not so bad, albeit a bit cracked and a trifle wavy, and he rolled out the well-known words as if he really felt them.

There was a high note to catch on the first line, but he went for it as if it was a fly ball and there were two men on bases, and he fielded it down sure enough.

There was a higher one still further on, where Joe speaks of getting married shortly.

Muldoon was bound to bag that one if he bursted a blood-vessel.

He took a deep breath, jumped at it and collared it better than he had the other.

Now came the final declaration that little Annie Rooney was his sweetheart.

They were all nice, easy, low notes on that.

It was easy as talking, singing that line was.

Muldoon intended to let himself out on that and score a home run.

Everybody was listening with the greatest attention.

You could almost hear a man's eyelash fall on the floor.

Muldoon swelled out his chest, looked as lovesick as he could, thumped his shirt front hard with his fist and let go.

It was the supreme effort of his life and you could easily tell it.

You can bet that even Patti could not put any more expression into that line.

She might go away and above over Muldoon in the matter of voice, but he could lead her by a length when it came to putting in the soul.

Out rattled the notes in fine style:

"Little Annie Rooney is my sweetheart."

Then something took place.

PART XII.

WHEN Muldoon had finished the chorus to the first verse of "Little Annie Rooney," he received an ovation.

That is to say, you might call it that, if you were at a loss for a word.

Most people would use some other.

It was certainly an ovation, however.

It was also a fracas.

Perhaps cyclone would be the most appropriate word.

At all events, the results of Muldoon's singing were most remarkable.

First, all the pictures fell from the wall.

Then all the chairs tumbled to pieces.

Next the table, dishes and the whole business went to smash.

Then the whole gang cleared out.

Muldoon stood alone amid the havoc he had wrought.

"Well, I've med a sensation annyhow, be heavens!" he muttered, when his first surprise was over.

Then something touched him on the head.

It was one of the chandeliers.

Muldoon jumped back, looked up and muttered:

"Begob, av the chandeliers are goin' to fall down on me, it's time I got out."

With that he made a break for the door.

In the passage outside he met the head waiter.

"Bill against you, sir," said the man, politely.

"Yuz hov' a bill agin me?" gasped Muldoon, surprised.

"Yes, sir."

"For what?"

"Dinner for twenty, and damages to furniture."

"But I niver ordhered the dinner—I wor invited."

"You're the only one left, sir, and I must collect the bill from some one."

"Well, yez can't get it out av me, that's certain."

"Then you must pay for the damage to the furniture."

"I'll not pay a dom cent for anything!" sputtered Muldoon. "Yez can make a sucker av me aisy enough, but not a dom fool."

Muldoon kept his word this time, sure enough.

He did not pay a cent, and out he went as mad as he could well be.

He grabbed his hat and coat and dusted, and the perpetrators of the joke had to pay the bill.

They could fool Muldoon, as he had himself declared, but as to making him pay for a joke played upon himself, that was quite another affair.

He was not allowed to hear the last of the snap for some little time, though.

On his way home he stopped in at a quiet little place on a side street to get a siphon of vichy water, in connection with something else.

As he was imbibing his mixture somebody over in the corner said:

"Ask him to sing Annie Rooney, won't you?"

"No, sir, not here. I have no insurance."

"To the divil wid ye and Annie Rooney, the both av yez!" muttered Muldoon.

He paid his score and went out, and was passing a corner when the well-remembered voice of young Nibbsey was heard singing:

"She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau,
She's my Annie, I'm her—"

"Cheese it!" some one suddenly cried. "Do yer want de houses all fallin' down on youse?"

"I'll half-sole that red-headed imp's breeches when I see um, be heavens!" muttered Muldoon, as he went on.

When he reached his own house he called up Frills, the butler, and said:

"Bring me a small bottle av yeller label frappay on ice. I want to cool me t'roat."

"Yes, sir," said the man who slept in a dress suit—no one ever saw him without it—"yes, sir, and by the way, sir, this telegram came just now, sir. I signed for it."

Muldoon tore open the dirty white envelope given to him by Frills and took out a blank, on which was written:

"DEAR POP—Don't sing Annie Rooney when you get home. Mother is rather nervous."

"ROGER."

Muldoon tore the message to pieces with what sounded very much like a tropical expression.

"I'll bet a cigar that the young vilyan put up the whole job, be heavens!" he sputtered. "For two dollars I'd make Kitty a widdy, but thin she's fond av the young robber and I suppose it'd be too bad."

The next morning there were several letters on Muldoon's plate when he came to breakfast.

The first was from a theatrical manager.

"DEAR MR. MULDOON—Since your singing of 'Annie Rooney,' Patti isn't in it. Telegraph terms for concert tour of three weeks, positively last farewell appearances."

"HENRY E. ABBOTT."

Muldoon frowned, chucked the letter aside, and opened the next.

"DEAR MULDOON—Greatest discovery since that of Columbus. Want you for World's Fair in Chicago."

PHIL MCGINN,
Chairman."

"Howly Caysar, is there nothing ilse at all?" growled Muldoon, ripping open the third letter.

"MULDOON—Old Sweetness, I heard you sing last night and since then life has no charm for me without you. When you read this I shall be a shivering corpse unless you will be mine."

"SWEET VIOLETS."

Muldoon dashed the whole batch of letters, opened and unopened, upon the floor.

"Thin galoots think they're moighty funny, but I can knock the tar out av ivery wan av thin, be heavens!" he vociferated.

"Why, what's the matter, Father Muldoon?" asked Kitty, Roger's wife.

"Don't call me Father Muldoon; it's no priest I am, me dear. Ax the young vilyan be your side phwat's the matther wid me. He knows."

"Sure, what's Roger done this time?" asked Mrs. Muldoon. "Yez do be always naggin' at him."

"Oh, nothing; only the same as he's always doin'; makin' a fool av me, that's all."

"There's no need av that, faix!" snapped the lady.

"Why don't yez spake to him thin?"

"Troth, yez can make a fool av yersilf without any help from him, ye ould gawk."

"Oho, that's it, is it?" laughed Muldoon.

"I've hurted yer feelings talking about Roger, have I? Faix, thin, I'd like to hurt his wid a thrunk sthrap or a shingle. It's a pity he ever got too big to be licked."

"How do you know he's done anything at all?" said Mrs. Muldoon, bridling.

Although her son was now a man grown and married, she would not allow Muldoon to say a word against him.

"The snap bears his private trade mark, that's all," laughed Muldoon, "but since ye are so hysterical about it, me Connemara cuckoo, I'll settle wid him privately."

When Muldoon went down to the flats it was just the same.

Everybody he met who knew him had something to say about Annie Rooney, his singing. The Picture that was Hung on the Wall, or something of that sort.

By the time he reached the office it was a moldy chestnut.

"Av that bye Nibbsey says annything to me about Annie Rooney, I'll par'lyze um, be heavens!" he muttered, as he went down-stairs.

Nibbsey was too fly, or he had been warned, or the thing was an old story to him now, but, at any rate, he did not mention the young lady in question.

Muldoon did not like so much dust on top of his desk, and he procured a big sponge and was swabbing it off when in came Dan.

"Good-morning, Terry. Have yez h'ard av anny roo—"

Biff!

Swish!

Thump!

That big sponge flew across the room, took Dan in the mouth, and choked forth all further reference to the tabooed subject.

"And what's the matther wid yer, annyhow?" gasped Dan, when he got his breath.

"Yez knows well enough."

"Faix, I do not."

"Then ye deserve to get soaked in the jaw, ye ould greenhorn."

"But I hadn't scarcely said a worrud whin ye pasted me."

"Yez had said enough, be heavens!" growled Muldoon.

"Faix, it wor only a civil question I wor axin' yez."

"Well, yez got yer answer quick enough, annyhow."

"Faix, it's a crank ye are, and there's no livin' wid yez."

"Isn't there?"

"No."

"Thin move out. Yez don't pay anny rint annyhow, and I'll lose nothin' be the change."

"Faix, yez wudn't ax rint av yer own brother, wud yez?"

"To be sure. Av yez kep' a butcher shop, wud yez supply me wid mate for nothin'?"

"Oh, well, that's different."

"Yis, av coorse, because it's ye that's in it. Av I wor the butcher, yer bills wud go up just the same as they do for the rint, and I'd get left."

"Well, ye're rich and I'm not."

"That's no raison I should be med a sucker av and the thing kep' up all night and the next day. Wurren't ye satisfied wid the joke lasht night widout alludin' to it again this morning?"

"I wor not alludin' to it."

"Ye wor, and ye're a liar av yez say ye wor not."

"But I do say I wor not."

"Warn't yez about to ax me a question in regard to Annie Rooney, when I choked yez off with the sponge?"

"Annie Rooney?"

"Aha."

"I wor not."

"Ye're a dom liar!" said Muldoon, emphatically.

"No, I'm not; I wor not thinkin' a worrud about Annie Rooney. I wor goin' to ax yez av yez knew av anny rooms in the nebbhood where I could sind a frind av mine."

At this very reasonable explanation, which was the true one, Muldoon broke into a laugh.

"Well, well, that's the best yet," he exclaimed. "Faix, I'd had nothin' else but Annie Rooney given to me all the mornin' and it med me mad, and when yez began I thot it wor the same ould chestnut, and so I soaked yez."

"Yer did, faix. Is it wan pail or two the thing howlds?"

"Faix, yez orter know, ye got it," chuckled Muldoon.

Annie Rooney was given a vacation after that.

That young terror, Nibbsey, was as much up to the snuff these days as ever, and he and his cronies of the neighborhood managed to get as much enjoyment out of life as could be obtained.

As a rule, those troublesome female tenants of Muldoon's let the young red-head alone, but occasionally their temper got the better of their discretion and they went for him.

It happened invariably that Nibbsey came off victorious in these quarrels, and yet, when an occasion offered, the women would pick a fuss with him, totally unmindful of their past experience.

It happened one morning that Madame Finnegan thought she had cause for complaint. She went to the elevator shaft, and bawled down:

"Neow thin, ye red-headed misfit, where's the coal ye wor goin' to sind up?"

"What's dat?" asked Nibbsey, from the cellar.

"Where's me coal, I say?"

"Ah, what are yer beefin' at? De coal went up long ago."

"No, it did not. Ye're no good, so ye air, and the boss ought to fire yez out."

"Ah, go on; de coal went up, I tell yer."

"I say it did not. Don't yez suppose I

know me own scuttle? It has me own private mark on it, a dint in the front."

"Yare, I know dat dent. Dat's where yer hit de Mick when you two got ter scrappin' de oder day."

"Niver mind how it got there, ye monkey; it's there, and I know me own scuttle."

"Well, it went up long ago."

"It has not, ye red-headed liar. Yez hov it down there yet."

"Ah, go close yer face. I tell yer it's went up. Take me oat' if youse women don't give me a pain in de neck."

"I'll come down there and give yez wan in the jaw if yez gives me anny lip!" retorted the Finnegan woman.

"Yes, you will!" retorted the boy, sarcastically.

"Well, I will av ye don't sind up me scuttle."

"I ain't got it."

"Yez hov so."

"Well den, send down de elevator for it."

The elevator was on the floor above and Madame Finnegan drew it down.

On it was her particular scuttle filled with coal.

"Well, yez had no right to sind it up to the Dootchwoman," she muttered.

"Who did? You're off yer route dis mornin', Finnegan."

"Av yez call me Finnegan, ye young loafer, I'll come down there and belt the head off yez," retorted the lady, as she removed the coal.

"Ah, rats!" said Nibbsey, giving the elevator a yank.

About ten minutes afterwards an Italian, with an organ and a monkey, came through the street and stopped in front of the flats.

Thinking this as good a place as any for giving a concert, the Italian began to grind out "That is Love," while two young vagabonds on the other side of the street were punching each other's heads.

Of course the people in the flats wanted to hear the music.

Nibbsey was one of these, and he went half way up the steps for that purpose.

Finnegan had her head out of the window and so had La Signora Piscatelli and the German woman.

The monkey attracted considerable attention, of course.

"There's yer little brother, ye red-head," bawled Madame Finnegan to Nibbsey.

Then she laughed at what she considered a fine sally of wit.

The monkey began to look around for pennies the while his master ground out another tune.

Nibbsey skipped into the cellar and fetched out half an apple, and called to the monk.

The latter made a jump for it, pulled the chain out of the Dago's hand and lighted on Nibbsey's shoulder.

The boy gave him a bit of the fruit and then a piece of cooky and petted him.

That suited the connecting link right down to the ground, and he thought Nibbsey was immense.

Then that fly youth suddenly skipped down the cellar with him.

The link did not mind, for he thought he was going to get something else good.

Nibbsey skipped over to the elevator, put the monkey on it and sent it flying up. He stopped it at the third flat, and then blew a dandy old blast through the tube.

"Dat'll be one on Finnegan," he remarked to himself, as he began to dance.

Madame Finnegan heard the whistle, thought her groceries had come and ran to the elevator.

The minute she opened the door out jumped that frightened monkey right on top of her head.

Then she let out a yell that frightened the creature all the more, and rushed from the kitchen.

Her daughter was in the parlor practicing for her first appearance, which had not yet been arranged, no manager having been found with sufficient hardihood to give her an opening.

Mary Jane Finnegan had just struck into "Ta-ra-ra-boom-ta-ra," when her mother and the monk burst into the room.

The aspiring serio-comic struck a false note, fell off the piano stool, and upset a

China cuspidor as the monkey made a flying jump for the piano.

He alighted on the bass notes, making a sound like a sudden thunder storm, and from that point leaped for a picture of Finnegan when sober, hanging on the wall opposite.

The chain caught in the music rack, and down came Mr. Monk, chattering and scolding like mad.

"Mercy on us, Mary Ann, we'll all be kilt!" cried Mrs. Finnegan. "Take him out av that!"

"Take him out of it yerself, yer old gawk," answered the dutiful daughter, getting up from the floor.

The monkey had fallen on the piano, and now, with his hands full of sheet music, he began to improvise a snow-storm.

"Oh, the nasty beast!" shrieked the serio-comic. "Just look at my music, and them's all new pieces."

"Faix, it's curl papers he's makin' av thim neow," cried Mrs. Finnegan; "but I'll fix him, the robber."

Then she seized a gorgeous carpet foot-stool and hurled it at the link.

Her arm was good enough, but the monkey dodged.

Mary Jane got the thing alongside the head and suddenly sat down.

Monkeys are imitative as we all know, and this one was no exception.

Having nothing else, he grabbed up a stunning green grass vase with red, blue and yellow flowers painted on it and let it fly at Mrs. Finnegan.

The lady was not hit, but the vase was of no use as an ornament after that.

"Oh, glory! wud yez luck at that!" howled the woman. "I'll have the lah on that Italian as sure as I'm standin' here."

Having torn up all the music within reach, Jocko now tried to pull out the piano keys to see what was under them.

The serio-comic grabbed the broom, the first time she had touched it in weeks, and made a crack at Jocko at long range.

Off the piano he went flying and then, seeing the open window, he dashed for it.

The chain did not catch again until he had reached the sill, but as soon as he began to climb down by the blinds outside, Mrs. Finnegan banged down the window.

The end of the chain was nipped, and Mr. Monk was suddenly suspended between two stories.

He chattered and yelled, and tried to catch on somewhere, the Italian swore and sputtered and called, and every one else howled.

Nibbsey was now taking in the fun from the sidewalk, softly remarking to himself:

"I'll bet dere was lots o' fun up on Finnegan's floor. Maybe she won't give me any more guff in a hurry."

"Letta come down, givea me de monk, open de wind!" yelled the Dago.

Mrs. Finnegan had gone away from the window, and she could not have heard what the man said, in any event.

The unfortunate monkey managed to hold on with teeth and nail to the spaces between the bricks, but he was half scared to death, and nothing would induce him to let go.

At last, seeing that the people up-stairs would not release the monkey, his master determined to go up after him.

Things promised to be more lively than ever for the Finnegans.

At that interesting moment along came Muldoon.

PART XIII.

Muldoon reached the flats the Italian, organ and all, was just going up the front stoop.

"Phwat do yez want here?" demanded the landlord. "Yez can't go in there."

"Whata you gotta say bouta dat—who a you?" snorted the Dago.

"Who am I, faix? I'm the owner av this property, that's who I am, and whin I say yez don't go in, yez don't, be heavens!"

"Me wanta mea monk; Irishawoman no leta comea down, mea goa get."

"No, yez won't. Phwat is she doing wid the monkey, anyhow?"

"Derea de monk! hangs up a dere, breaka him neck, alla fright; Irishawoman no leta get a down."

Muldoon looked up and saw the suspended monkey.

"Faix, that's on Finnegan's flure," he muttered. "Be heavens, that woman do all the time be making trouble."

Then a spirit of revenge took hold of him and he said:

"All right! Go an up-stairs and get the crather av it belongs to ye, but don't come around here anny more wid monkeys. We've enough av them in the house now."

Muldoon then opened the door for the Italian, and the latter went in, while the Solid Man stepped down to see the fun from a distance.

"There'll be ructions when that Dago

baste av a monkey," he sputtered. "Faix, they'd ought to kape thim out intirely, so they had."

Meanwhile, the grinder had struck the Finnegan flat and had made a demand for his pet.

"Get out of this, ye dirty garlic atin' slob," cried Madame Finnegan, getting red in the face. "How dar' ye inther a lady's apartmints like that? Go an out wid yez or I'll scald th' ugly face aff av yez."

"Me wanta de monk', data all," said the Italian. "You no gota de right to keepa, me wanta, Irisha loaf."

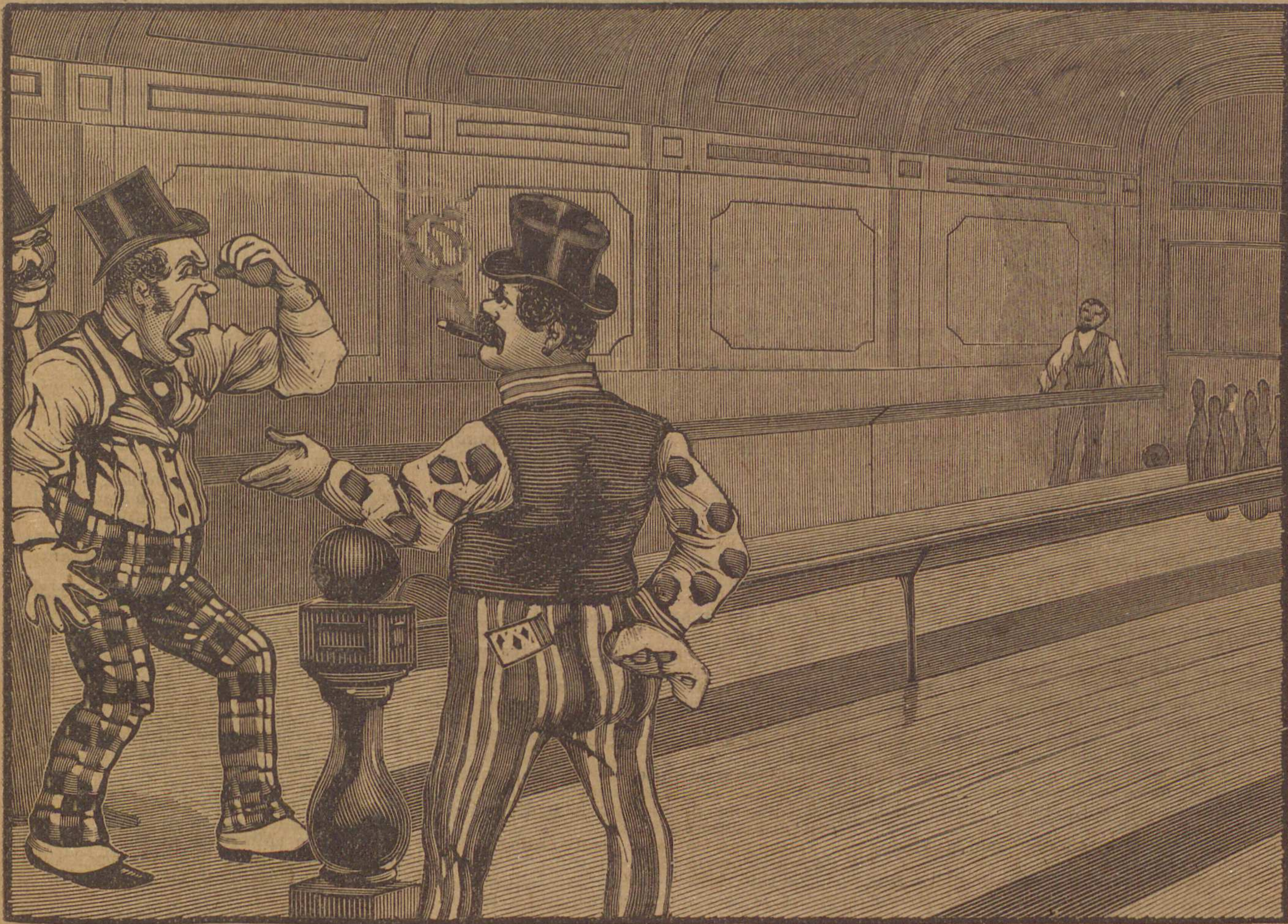
"I haven't got yer dirty baste av a monkey and I don't want it. I'm a dacint, hard-working woman, and I pay me rint rig'lar

It is de latest style,
Where did yer git de——"

"Niver mind where I got it, ye young warbler," cried Muldoon, "and go aisy on that singin' or yez'll have to wear sheet iron in the sate av yer pants. Faix, it's no hat at all I have, be heavens. I had a right to take the price av it out av the Dago."

"Dey's an old one in de closet dat yer kin have, boss, till yer get anoder," said the boy. "Geel but didn't de monk go fur dat one? Wisht yer could ha' saw de way he chewed it up."

"Begob, I'll chew ye up av yez don't curtail yer narrative, me conflagration-headed cuckoo," said Muldoon. "Fetch me out



Muldoon could hardly believe his eyes. "Be heavens, that's funny!" he muttered, shading his eyes with his hands and glancing down the alley. "They're ivery wan av thim shtanding, just the same as if I hadn't touched them."

meets that ould Finnegan woman," he remarked.

There was one before that, however.

Mrs. Finnegan, looking out of the window, saw the monkey's plight.

Then she opened it, releasing the chain which held the suspended, struggling simian.

Down went that monk in a jiffy all in a heap.

As good luck would have it, he alighted on Muldoon's head.

That fine new dicer of the latter's was torn to ribbons in short order.

The monkey clawed and bit and tore it, and in three shakes it was not fit to throw in an ash barrel.

Perhaps it was fortunate that the hat suffered, for, otherwise, Muldoon's head and face might have got it.

"Howly fiddler, take him off!" yelled Muldoon, not knowing what had struck him. "Phwat is it, annyhow? Take it off or I'll be kilt."

Somebody grabbed the chain, and the monkey was dragged away, but not until Muldoon had received a fine old scratch on the nose.

"The mischief take the Italian and his

and I'll not be talked back to be no organ-grinding I-talians, and av yez don't get out av this I'll break the broomstick——"

"No carea for dat, no carea you paya de rent, no carea whata you are, me wanta de monk'; you hanga him outa de wind', you killa him, I breaka de facea, smasha de jaw; you no givea me him, me calla de policeman, make you arrest, putta you ina de cool, havea you locka up."

"Yis you will, you greasy Dago. I'd like to see yez, begob. Go on out and quit giving me back talk."

Then the angry woman caught up a broom and banged the organist over the head and shoulders till he was glad to sound a retreat.

In the street he found his darling monkey and then he skipped out, resolving nevermore to set foot in such an unfriendly neighborhood, if he knew it.

"Faix, it looks as though the sunny Tuscan got the worst av it," muttered Muldoon, as he went in. "That Finnegan woman is a terror intirely."

Just then the voice of Nibbsey was heard remarking in musical tones:

"Where did yer git dat hat?

the extra chapeau and don't have so much to say."

"Reckon de boss ain't got no call to say nuthin' about de color of me head," muttered Nibbsey, in quite audible tones, as he went to the closet. "His own hair is red enough, or it would be if he had any to talk about."

"Kape yer remarks to yersilf," cried Muldoon, who wanted to laugh, "and fetch an the dicer widout anny more preliminary observations."

Nibbsey brought out a white hat, gave it a brushing and passed it to Muldoon who put it on, and then began to look over his letters.

He had just finished this occupation, when in walked the Hon. Mike Growler, looking as gay as a circus wagon.

"How goes it, Mul, old sport?" was his salutation, as he sat on the back of a chair and spat on the floor. "Rushin' der season, ain't yer? I'm a early plant meself, and der Lily o' Nevada comes up ahead of anyting, but yer kin shoot me if I ever put on a white dicer before der fust o' June."

"I am not aware, Mr. Growler, that ye set the fashion for me," said Muldoon, with great dignity. "Be heavens, av I

desoire to wear a white hat at Christmas I'll do it, faix, widout axin' yere privilege, me Western Beau Brummel."

"Don't yer go to callin' me no cough drop, Mul," muttered Mike, "or yer'll get bowled out."

"Go an, ye ould bluffer—what do ye know about bowling?"

"Doosed sight more'n you do, I'll bet," said Mr. Growler. "If yer made a ten strike, ye'd die o' heart disease from der surprise."

"Deed an' I would not," said Muldoon, promptly. "Mebby yez don't know that I'm a member av three bowling clubs, and the champion player av two av thim."

"Ah, wot yer givin' us?" snorted Mike, spitting at Nibbsey's boots and half drowning the cat by his bad aim. "I'm a simple, trustin' kid, I are, an' I believe in Sandy Claus, an' dat dere's faries an' all dat, but yer can't stuff me wid any such guff as dat. You a good bowler! Ah, come down on de earth!"

"I'm there already, so I am, but it's ye that wants to get off it. We have no room for anny more liars."

"Yer call yerself a bowler, do yer?" asked the Hon. Mike, putting his hands in the arm-holes of his vest and puffing out his panic-producer shirt front. "Ah, go on, you ain't in it. You couldn't knock down der balls in ten shots, you couldn't."

"Ye're a falsifier, so ye are, and a liar! Faix, yez know I can bowl, becos ye've seen me do it, manny's the time, in the Alderman's."

"Ah, dat was when yer was young. Maybe yer could do it den, but yer ain't in it now."

"Faix, I'll bet yez I can make three tin strikes to yere wan!" cried Muldoon, getting mad.

"Bet yer five dollars yer won't make one in three shots," retorted the Lily of Nevada.

"I'll take yez up. Come an around to the club and I bowl yez aff yer feet, be heavens!" cried Muldoon, jumping up.

"Naw, I don't know anybody at der club. What's der matter wid Maguire's? You know him, don't yer?"

"Faix, I don't care where yez go," said Muldoon. "If yez think yez can bluff me yez are mistaken, Mike Growler. Come an and see me par'lyze ye."

"Talk comes cheap, Mul, but it's doin' der ting wot counts," replied the statesman, as he got off his perch and moved toward the door.

In a few minutes they were in the bowling place and had taken off their coats.

The pins were already set up in two of the alleys, but no one was bowling.

"Gimme fust shot, Mul?" asked Mike, picking up a ball.

"Certainly, av yez likes," said Muldoon, standing back.

The Nevada sport put some chalk on the soles of his shoes, grabbed a big ball, poised it carefully in both hands while he got his eye on the pins, made a rush forward and then let go.

The ball flew down the alley, at one side as it seemed at first, but by the time it was within six feet of the pins, was squarely in the center.

It struck the kingpin a resounding crack, and down went the whole ten all in a heap.

"How's dat, hey, Mul, old sheroot?" asked Mr. Growler, puffing at the cigar which he had held tight between his teeth while taking aim.

"Sure, that's all right, Mike," said Muldoon, fondling a ball; "but it's no better than I can do meself."

"Dat's wot you say, Mul, but I want see yer do it."

"Faix, I kin make the same identical shot meself, and make it three times hand running, and that's more than ye'll do, be heavens!"

"Go on and let's see yer do it den, and don't beef over it all day!" returned the Hon. Mike, while the loiterers in the place gathered to see Muldoon make his ten strike.

He grabbed the ball, took aim, rushed into the alley and let drive straight at the foremost pin.

The ball hit it fairly enough, as all were ready to admit.

It did not knock it down, however.

On the contrary, it bounded back, caromed against another pin, collided with the side of the alley, and finally tumbled into the pit.

Not a single pin had been upset.

Muldoon could hardly believe his eyes.

"Be heavens, that's funny!" he muttered, shading his eyes with his hands and glancing down the alley. "They're ivery wan av thim shtanding, just the same as if I hadn't touched thim."

"Don't believe yer did, Mul," said Mike. "I told yer dat yer was givin' me guff."

"Faix, I wor not," said Muldoon, flushing up, "and I'll show yez what I can do."

Then he grabbed another ball and let fly at the pins.

It could not have gone straighter.

It hit the head pin plump in the center.

Just the same that pin remained standing when the ball stopped rolling.

So did all the other pins on the alley.

Then a shout went up from all the spectators.

"Well, you're a nice bowler, you are."

"Why don't you go down there and kick 'em over?"

"You're a daisy champion, you are."

Muldoon was fairly paralyzed with surprise.

"Be heavens, I believe it's hoodooed they are," he grunted.

The Nevada Lily now let her go again at the pins on his alley.

He sent seven of them flying into the tureen.

"Ha! I tould yez that yez couldn't do it again," said Muldoon.

"Maybe I can't, but I are done it once more dan you've done," said Mr. Growler.

"Gimme de five bones, Mul."

"I'll knock thim flyin' this time or pur'sh in the attimpt," growled Muldoon, picking up the biggest ball in the trough.

He let it fly, but that was all the good it did him.

Not a single pin left its place.

"Dat's der last chance yer got," said Mike, starting a ball down his alley.

It knocked the whole business silly.

"I'm dommed av I roll anny more," said Muldoon, in disgust, putting on his coat.

"The balls is all bewitched or the pins aither, I don't know which. What'll yez have, all of yez?"

They all adjourned to the counter, while a saturnine mile frisked around the big mouth of the Nevada politician.

"Dat takes der bolivar," he remarked to himself. "I don't believe Mul would tumble if a hull block o' houses fell on him."

Muldoon was quite correct in thinking that he had been hoodooed.

He did not know how it had been accomplished for all that.

Those pins had been firmly nailed to the floor previous to his coming.

The Hon. Mike Growler had deliberately put up a job on him before going to the office.

Then he had dexterously led up to the subject and forced Muldoon to make the bet.

In fact, it was a cold-blooded swindle, and Muldoon never suspected it.

He was just superstitious enough to think that something had bewitched the balls and nobody enlightened him.

"Begob, I'd ought to have known not to play an a Frida' widout forst crossin' me fingers," he muttered. "I might have known I'd be hoodooed."

"Dat's a nice way to get out of it, ain't it?" snickered Mr. Growler. "Why don't yer own up dat yer ain't no good at bowlin' no more, and pay up like a man?"

Mr. Growler took his brother-in-law's five dollars without the slightest compunction, and nobody said a word.

Perhaps if he had not got it out of Muldoon in that way he would in some other, so I don't believe that Terrence was any worse off than he would have been in any case.

The boss of the place gave Mr. Growler a wink and an expressive look, and the Nevada Lily asked the gentlemen to take something.

"Ever try shootin' at der targets, Mul?" he presently asked.

"Be heavens, I have thin, and it's a dandy sharpshooter I am."

"Yer can't beat me."

"Go an, I can."

"Kin yer shoot der spots out of a big casiner? Well, I kin, and do it in ten shots. Why, out in Nevada, der boys uster get me to make porous plasters for dem when der stores was out o' dem. Yer never see holes put in so reg'lar."

"Well, ye take the belt for lying, annyhow," said Muldoon. "No wan will dispute thot."

"Ah, go on, come see me shoot if yer don't believe it," said Mike. "Bet yer don't hit nuthin', Mul."

There was a shooting gallery in the place, among other things.

Once more Muldoon fell into the trap set for him by Mr. Growler.

It was no fun for him to enter into any sort of contest unless there was a stake.

He bet Mike ten dollars that the latter could not make more bull's-eyes than he, and Mr. Growler promptly took him up.

Then the match began.

The Nevada Lily kept ringing bells until the sound grew monotonous.

Muldoon did not get a single one.

Not only that, but he did not seem to hit the targets.

He aimed at pipes, at dancing balls, at swinging globes, and at stationary targets.

His success in one was equal to that in all.

He did not hit anything, whether moving or stationary.

"Whatever ails me the day?" he muttered. "Is it blind I am, or phwat's the matter?"

"Ah, yer never could hit nothin'—dat's what ails yer," said Mike. "I told yer yer was no good."

That was not the real reason for Muldoon's second failure.

I defy any one to make a score with blank cartridges.

That's the kind Muldoon had, Mike having bribed the attendant to load his rifles thusly.

Poor Muldoon had changed his rifle a dozen times, and always with the same result.

He never thought to do his own loading, however.

If he had, it is probable that the result would have been different.

At last he threw down his rifle in a passion, exclaiming:

"Be heavens, ye're enough to give anny wan bad luck, Mike Growler! Ye've hoodooed me, that's what I think!"

"Naw, dat ain't it," said Mike. "It's dat white hat you're wearing."

"No, sor, it's not! Oh, begorry, I hov' it now!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"What is it?" asked all hands.

"It's the thirteenth av the month, and it's Friday as well! No wondher I had no luck wid thim two things coming together."

Some of the gang believed this to be the correct solution of the mystery.

Those who knew otherwise, however, exchanged quiet smiles, and smiles of another nature were then passed around.

Moreover, there were small bottles called for when the Hon. Mike Growler requested the party to smile, and the gentleman from the breezy West did not carry home as much money as he had anticipated.

Muldoon was squared in one way, therefore.

"How are yer on billiards, Mul?" asked Mr. Growler, after a pause.

He had another trap set for his brother-in-law.

"Faix, I'm a dandy, and I bate the world an pool," said Muldoon. "But I'll not play wid yez."

"Wot are yer scared of? You ain't got no sportin' blood in yer."

"I don't care av I haven't. I made a false start the day and I'll have no luck at all. That Italian monkey queered me and I won't play nothin' till the day's over."

"Bet yer five dollars I'll beat yer at pool."

"Yez can't do it. I'll pocket the fifteen ball or any other yez want to mention, ivery time."

"Put up or shut up," remarked Mr. Growler, canting his cigar upwards. "I'm lookin' fur blood, I am. Der Lily of Nevada grows best where dere's dead men planted."

"Yer an ould stuff, that's what ye air," retorted Muldoon.

"Bet yer ten dollars yer can't pocket any ball after I bust 'em," said Mike, aggressively.

"Be heavens, I'll take yez up!" snorted Muldoon.

He was not going to let any such pudding pass by without taking some of it.

The whole gang adjourned to the billiard-room, Muldoon wearing a satisfied smile.

The balls were set up on a pool table, and Muldoon took off his coat and picked out a cue.

"I'll make it easy for yer, Mul," said Mike, as he poised his cue for a shot.

Then he gave that pyramid of ivory a

PART XIV.

THE weather was fine about this time, the flats were full, and Muldoon was in excellent spirits.

He did not have much to do with the gang since the sell that Mike had played upon him in the bowling alley, but the chances were that he would do so again before a great while.

He could never harbor ill feelings for a very long time, and he was sure to be on good terms again with the Hon. Mike Growler, sooner or later.

Just now, however, he let the Nevada Lily bloom unnoticed and did not go near the flats for two or three days.

anges, while inside, on the shelves, were sticks of candy in jars, jaw-breakers, popcorn balls, pickles and other things dear to the juvenile heart.

The good old lady was working away at her knitting when two bad boys came along that way.

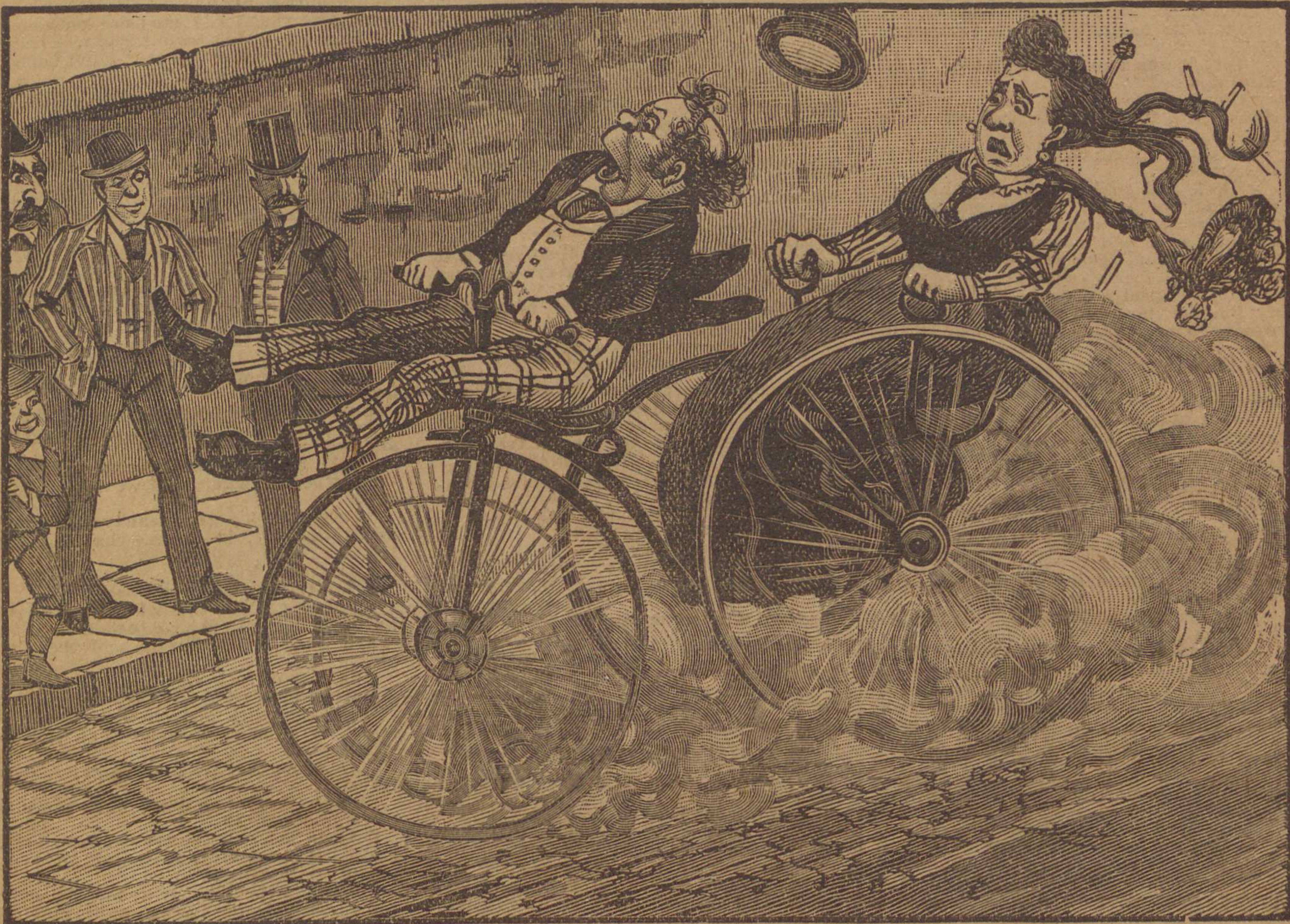
"Let's get a rig on de ole woman, Rocksey," said one.

"Yare—she gimme a cornball wid a stone in it, and I near broke me toot' yes'-day."

"Cheese it—go easy, and we'll get up a bully snap."

Then the two imps consulted in whispers.

The apple woman had not seen them,



Before Muldoon was aware he was flying down hill. He lost control of the machine and could only hold on with all his might. Away went his hat, the wind toyed with his topknot, and his coat tails flew out straight. "Don't go so fast, Terry!" screamed Mrs. Muldoon.

dandy smash. The balls were scattered all over the table.

Some of them were dangerously near to the pockets, and Muldoon smiled.

"Which wan wud yez like to see me put in forst?" he asked.

"I'm a careless old greaser, wid no mind at all," replied Mr. Growler, "and it don't make no diff to me at all. I'm sayin' dat yer can't put none o' dem in. See?"

"Ye're a dom liar, I'll put the fifteen in the corner pocket in wan minyute."

"Let her go!"

Muldoon drew bead on the cue ball and let her drive like lightning.

The fifteen was sent rattling for the corner straight enough, but it got into the jaws and then came out.

Muldoon dropped his cue in a rage.

"Be heavens, I'll not take up another dare the day!" he spluttered. "It's clean enchanted I am."

Then he went away mad, and never stopped to investigate.

Consequently he never knew that the pockets had been all stuffed with cotton clean to the muzzle.

One fine morning, however, when it was pretty near rent day he concluded to drop in and see how Nibbsey was making out alone.

He was dressed to kill, with a high dicer, patent leather shoes, and carried a natty silk umbrella, which he swung with the air of a drum major.

That same pleasant morning the street boys were on the avenue with their minds intent on mischief.

On the corner of Third avenue and one of the side streets above the depot, a thrifty apple woman had set up her stand.

It was really more than a stand; it was a little house that could contain a stove, and had room enough to store away stock.

It was like the coffee stands you see around town, and had a flap, which let down and served for a counter by day and could be shut up so as to close the window by night.

The windows were slid half way back, and the decent widdy woman who kept the place sat on a high stool inside, knitting and keeping her eyes out for customers.

On the flap counter was a tempting array of apples, bananas, peanuts and or-

and she was fortunately absorbed just then.

She was narrowing down on the heel of a stocking, and that requires considerable attention.

Suddenly all was dark, and it appeared to be raining apples and bananas.

Those two hoodlums had suddenly sneaked in, had got under the flap, and had sent it up with a bang so that it stuck fast.

Then they dusted out as fast as their legs would carry them, and skipped across the street.

At that moment along came Muldoon on his way to the flats.

They were in that street, and so was the stand, but he was bound further east.

Suddenly out flew the old woman, as mad as a March hare.

The first person she saw was Muldoon.

He certainly looked innocent enough, but that did not matter.

"How dar' ye!" she cried, getting in his way. "How dar' ye harass a poor decent woman like that, ye ugly looking dood?"

It was something new for Muldoon to be called a dude, and he was not a little astonished.

"Wan wud think yez had more sinse," went on the virago, "than to go and disturb a poor dacint widdy woman like that, ye onmannerly ould gorilla ye, but sure, none av the men nowadays have anny—all they do be thinking av is foine clothes and cigars and mashin' the girruls on the street; but, faix, av I wor a girrul I wudn't wipe me feet on the loikes av ye, and it's a great mind I have to call a policeman, so it is, and have yez—"

"But, me good woman," interrupted Muldoon, "I have not ann'yed yez in anny way that I am aware av, and it wud be the lasht—"

"Go on and don't talk to me, ye ugly looking dude. Sure, didn't I see yez turn up the couter an me this minyute?"

The two hoodlums now came across.

"Dat's de feller, Mis' Hogan! We seen him!"

"Tort it was a good joke, he did. Shall we slug him?"

"Go an out av this, ye young prevaricators!" said Muldoon, raising his umbrella threateningly.

The apple woman came to the rescue of the Arabs.

"Deed and ye'll not do annything av the kind, ye great, homely gorilla ye! Thim's dacint byes, and ye'd ought to be ashamed av yerself to threaten to raise yer hand agin thim! But ye min are no good, anyhow, and for two cints I'd—"

"But, me good woman—"

"I'm not yer good woman nor yer bad woman, nor any kind av a woman at all! Faix, I wouldn't have ye for a gift, and av yez have a wife, faix, it's blind she must have been to take up wid such a bald-headed ould gorilla as ye!"

"Slug him in der snoot, Mis' Hogan!" urged one of the boys.

"Go on, we'll stand by yer," said the second.

A crowd had now gathered.

It does not take much to get one up on a busy street in New York.

Not half of them knew what the trouble was about.

They were bound to stay there just the same, however.

Muldoon was fast losing his usual placidity of manner.

He was not accustomed to being talked to in that style and it rattled him.

"Faix, I don't know phwat yez do be talking about, be heavens," he muttered, "and I don't want to. Get out av me way all av yez. Faix, I think the ould woman must be crazy."

"Crazy, is it?" howled the apple woman, getting her own Irish up now. "How dar ye—"

Just then a policeman came forward.

He was the last one to arrive.

He was a Dutch copper.

"Here, here, vat's der medder mit der growd anyhow once?" he asked, elbowing his way into the middle of the crowd.

"This ould slob upset me stand an me, and thin insulted—"

"Faix, I did not. I niver touched the ould—"

"Ach! You Irishers been fighding all der dime once. I log you bote up off you said much."

"Lock me up, is it?" screamed the poor, decent widdy. "Oho! ye will, eh? Well, I guess not!"

"Faix, ye'd ought to be ashamed av yerself," put in Muldoon. "Phwat harrum has the lady done ye, I'd like to know? 'Deed and yer won't lock her up!"

Some women might have been mollified by this speech. The apple widow was not. She considered it a great piece of impertinence.

"Who tould ye to speak for me?" she demanded, turning on her defender. "Faix, I can fight me own battles, so I can, widout anny interference from ye."

"Ach, for why don'd you saddle dot yoursellufs und don'd bodder me once!" grunted the copper. "Gone away once out off dis, und don't drawed a crowd, aber I took you in."

"It's not the polis station yez'll want to take that ould hin to," said Muldoon, "but to the lunatic asylum, be heavens!"

Then he pushed his way through the crowd and went off, considerably ruffled.

"Begorry, some people have no sinse at all," he muttered. "Phwat the mischief

did the ould tarrier want to say I upset her stand for? Sure, it's sthandin' there yet. Manny's the apple I've bot av her, but it's no more I'll get, be heavens! The ingratichude av some people is monnymintal."

The crowd around the stand dispersed, the apple widow arranged her stock once more, and the two bad boys each got an apple for coming to her rescue.

Such is the wickedness of the small boy of the street, and such the blindness and obstinacy of some of its female citizens.

When Muldoon reached the flats, Nibbsey was in the office dusting off the desk and softly warbling to himself.

"Hallo, boss; good mornin'; take me oat, I tort you'd shoooken de place clean," he remarked, and then went on with his singing.

"Dere's a name dat's never spoken
And a mudder's heart is busted,
Dere's anoder—"

"Niver moind the rest av it, me bye," broke in Muldoon. "I know all about the picter that's turned to the wall."

"Do you, boss?" asked the red-haired youth, taking a reef in his single suspender.

"Well, how's dis?"

"Baby's gone and left us for de golden shore, And we won't never see her any more; Empty is the cradle—baby's gone—"

"That'll do ye now—that'll do ye," cried Muldoon. "That thing wor old tin years ago. Yis, and more."

"Oh, I know what yer want, boss. Yer want sumpin' good, like dis:

"White wings, dey never grow weary
Dey carry me cheerily over—"

"No, nor I don't want 'Sweet Violets,' naither, nor 'Kathleen Mavorneen,' nor 'Annie Laurie,' nor anny av thim chunes."

"Oh, I got a good one, boss; de very new-est song and dance. Just get onto it:

"Down where de pretty little violets and snow-drops bloom all the day,
There's where I met my pretty little Louise,
In the evening by the moonlight
And on Sunday we're go—"

"Av yez give me anny more av that ould song and dance av yours, I'll parlyze yer jaw!" yelled Muldoon. "Be heavens, I've not h'ard annything else for the past two years."

"Oh, I say, boss, he was in to see yer just now."

"Who wor in to see me?"

"You know. Mum's de word. I ain't givin' nothin' away."

"Faix, I see ye're not. Who wor it, me red-headed sphynx?"

"You know, boss. His picter is turned to de wall."

"Is it me brother Dan, yez mean?"

"Naw, not dat tarrier. O' course not."

"Who is it then? Mr. Burns?"

"Old Graveyard? Naw, it ain't."

"Well, then, who in tunder is it? Do yez think I have nothin' to do but guess conundrums? Go an, who was it?"

"Whiskers, and wanted ter know could yer lend him a dollar to go and get a pound o' nails."

"And phwat did he want nails for?" asked Muldoon.

"For to nail down pennies and den get some sucker to try and—"

Biff!

Nibbsey caught the shoebrush on top of his pretty red head.

"Go an, ye imp, and don't be makin' game av me, or yer family'll have to call in the cor'ner, be heavens," cried Muldoon.

At that minute the Hon. Mike Growler came in from his apartments above.

"Hallo, Mul, old sport," he said, tipping his hat forward. "How's ten-pins?"

"They're what ye ought to be."

"What's dat?"

"Nailed."

"Say, how's shootin'?"

"The same as yer mind, me Western whirlwind."

"How's dat?"

"Too much blank."

"Ah, go on! come out and have a run around der block with me."

"Faix, I think that's all I could get out av ye annyhow, Mr. Growler. Did ye give the bye a message for me?"

"Course not; I ain't seen him."

"Because av yez did yez can go look for some other— I mean yez can look for a

sucker in some other place, because I'm too busy."

"Dat's a good one as it stands, Mul," laughed Mike. "Some other sucker is bully!"

"Yis? Well, ye're the other one this time," said Muldoon, and Mike went off trying to find out what he meant.

"Bedalia, me Corkonian fairy," said Muldoon to his wife, one day about this time, "I do be thinking, bechune you and Oi, not to mintion the cat, that yez ought to take more exercise. Faix, ye're getting that fat, that—"

"Fat is it?" repeated Mrs. Muldoon, tossing her head so that her diamonds threw little showers of light all over her husband's shirt front.

"That's what I said, me prize package."

"Then yez didn't say it right. I may have considerable ombongpong, but I deny, in totality, that it's fat."

"Phwat wor that ye said, Bedalia? That's one on me, so it is. Faix, I've thraveled all over the world, but I niver saw or h'ard of wan av those things."

"Sure that's Frinch and it signifies stoutness. Maybe I do be getting stout, Terry, but that's different from bein' fat."

"Well, yez need more exercise to rejuce it."

"Don't I take the horses out ivery day on the bullyvard?"

"Yis, but that only rejuces thim, and yez are getting more stouter ivery day."

"What ilse cud I do thin?"

"Ride on wan av thim bicycles, av coorse."

"Oh, I niver would—I'd fall aff at the forst thry."

Muldoon stirred up the straggling hairs on top of his head with his dexter index and then remarked:

"Faix, I hov' it! We'll get wan av thim three wheeled jiggers and we'll both ride it."

"Do yez think yez cud manage it, Terry?" asked the lady, in a somewhat dubious tone.

"Av coorse."

"But it might tip over."

"Sure, it can't do that whin the two av uz are on it. All yez have to do is to steer it and make the pedals go and there ye air."

"Faix, it do look aisy," said Mrs. Muldoon, contemplatively. "I've often noticed thim in the pairk and on the bullyvards and they seem much safer than the bi-sickles."

"Av coorse they are, and two can ride on thim."

"Maybe Roger has wan that he can lind uz to practice on?"

"No, he has only the two-wheeled wan, and Kitty has another av her own and they go out be thimsilves."

"Well, maybe I'll thry it, but I'd want some lessons before I wint out in public."

"No, yez wudn't. All yez hov to do is to sit shill and let me do all the manipu-latin'. That's aisy enough, isn't it?"

"Yis, I suppose so, but—"

"Why, there's Mulcahey's wife, she wint on wan last week, widout the laste bit av a thry beforehand, and she rid bea-uchiful, they do say."

"I hope yez don't compare me wid that woman," snapped Mrs. Muldoon, who never did fancy her old neighbor's wife.

Muldoon's sly little dig did the business, however, and that evening she asked her husband if he had bought the tricycle yet.

"No, I thot yez didn't want it," he answered, "but I can ordher it to-morrer."

"Oh, no—niver mind," said she. "I have no desire to copy the Mulcaheys."

Muldoon knew that she was crazy for the machine, all the same, and the next day he bought one, practiced with it till he got the hang of it, and then had it sent up to the house.

It was one of the kind where the man sits in front and the lady rides behind, and was a beauty, and no discount.

Around it came in the afternoon, Mrs. Muldoon being all ready to go out, and in a few minutes off they started.

"Sure, this is fine intirely," said Mrs. Muldoon, when they were speeding along the avenue.

"It's asier than walkin', so it is," said Muldoon.

They went up Fifth avenue to the park,

and then up one side of it, and finally struck a fine, broad, well paved avenue, where it was just glorious to ride.

"Faix, I don't see as ye're getting so much exercise afther all, Bedalia," said Muldoon, after a long spell.

"But look at the beautiful air I get, Terry, and the foine ride. It's betther nor a carr'age, so it is."

"Yis, for ye," he answered, wiping his forehead, "but how about me? I think it's a machine av yer own yez had ought to have."

"I'm quite satisfied as it is," was the tranquil reply.

They had got up Ninety-something street and Muldoon decided to turn back.

"Yez mustn't go too far the forst day," he remarked. "I think I'll go back."

"Thin go an some other avenue," suggested Mrs. Muldoon.

"Sure, I thot yez'd go up on the Riverside Drive, so I did."

"We've gon' quite far enough for wan time," said Muldoon, "but av yez like we'll go through this street and go down the nixt avenyer."

Mrs. Muldoon was agreeable, and her husband turned off and went spinning toward the river.

In fact, he spun rather more than he desired.

He was on a decided down grade in a couple of minutes.

The street was decidedly off the level just here and descended at a considerable angle.

Before Muldoon was aware he was flying down hill.

He lost control of the machine and could only hold on with all his might.

Away went his hat, the wind toyed with his topknot, and his coat tails flew out straight.

"Don't go so fast, Terry!" screamed Mrs. Muldoon.

It was all very well to tell him this.

He could not help going fast to save his neck.

You could not see the spokes of the wheels they flew around so lively.

Mrs. Muldoon was holding on for all she was worth and yelling at every breath.

The hill was a steep one and the way they went down it discounted express trains.

"Be heavens, I'll go slap into the river; I know I will!" gasped Muldoon, with his teeth firmly set.

So he would, if nothing intervened to stop him.

Something was bound to.

Dogs were chasing him, small boys were yelling, a policeman woke up and called to him to stop, but on he went all the same.

"Howly sailor, will we niver come to a stop?" groaned Muldoon, hanging onto the handles in utter desperation.

He did stop and sooner than he expected.

PART XV.

ABOUT two-thirds of the way down the hill that Muldoon was descending, a row of houses was in process of erection.

The street, as is usual in such cases, was occupied for half its width by bricks, timbers and other building material.

There was room enough on the other half for Muldoon to pass if he had been there.

He was not on that side of the way, however.

He was on the other side, and, moreover, he could not steer any more than a cow.

He just had to go and that was all there was to it.

Some of the workmen saw him coming and yelled.

Muldoon saw a pile of timbers, two or three feet high, lying in the road and tried to stop. He only went the faster.

The next minute he struck something.

There was a crash, a vision of flying steel, busted wheels and bent wire, and then a slump.

Incidentally, Muldoon and his lady went whisking through the air.

Then there was a peculiar sound, not a dull thud exactly, but a sound as of a mule's hoof being pulled out of the mud.

It was not kissing. Oh, no!

Muldoon and his wife had just landed, figuratively speaking.

They did not fall on the ground, and there were no broken bones, sprained skulls, or anything of that sort.

They were plumped into a big pile of nice, soft, freshly-wetted, newly-hoed mortar, for use in the new buildings.

They struck it all of a heap, and struck it solid.

Plunk!

Squash!

It was very mortifying, but it was so, nevertheless.

The stuff flew all around with a great splash.

Those two wheelers made an immense impression that time.

Muldoon's impression was about six feet square and his wife's was bigger yet.

Well, there was a howl from the workmen.

They laughed and they yelled, and for a few minutes no one made a move except to laugh.

Then Muldoon began to crawl out of the mortar.

He made some kind of a sound, but no one knew what it was.

Then the men pulled him and his wife out of the mortar pile.

They were a sight to behold, separately and together.

Plastered with mortar from head to foot, they looked more like stone images than human beings.

Their clothes were ruined, their faces were smeared all over, and mortar dropped from them in great gobs.

The tricycle was busted all to smash, but nobody thought of looking for that.

The only thing to be done just then was to laugh.

The bricklayers, plasterers, masons and hod carriers, a dozen or more, all gathered around and howled.

Muldoon wiped a mass of mortar from his mouth and said:

"It's no laughing matter, be heavens, ye dom tarriers. Get me some wather, quick, ye gillies, or I'll be smothered."

They got it for him.

More than he wanted, perhaps, but they got it.

There was a big butt of water standing near, not more than six feet away.

Muldoon was sent floundering into it in a twinkling.

Then the tarriers soused him up and down till the mortar was pretty well washed off him.

His clothes were ruined all the same, what with the lime and the water, but he wasn't smothered.

"Hould on, hould on, ye dom tarriers!" he yelled, breaking loose and standing up in the big tub. "Do yez want to dhrown me?"

"Oh, you said you wanted water," drawled the boss, a big, six foot Yank, "and we give it to ye, b'gosh."

"Oh, glory, me dhress is ruined!" screamed Mrs. Muldoon, upon whom the men were now turning the hose. "Howiver shall I get home afther this?"

"Faix, the tub wudn't be big enough to put Bedalia in," laughed Muldoon. "Sure, the river would hardly be enough to wash all that morthar aff."

"See here, I want pay fur that mortar," grinned the boss. "Yew tew must ha' took away twenty hods o' the stuff."

"Ye're an ould stuff yerself, be heavens," retorted Muldoon. "Phwat business had yez to blockade the street wid it, annyhow? I've a moind to sae yez for damages, so I have."

"Wall, I reckon you'd ha' been wuss off if it hadn't ha' been thar," muttered the boss, with a horse laugh. "Reckon you'd had ter been took up in a pail only fur that."

A good deal of the mortar was scraped from Mrs. Muldoon's garments, but plenty remained, and her hair was stiff with it.

Fortunately there were some people living not far away, and the poor woman was kindly taken care of and sent home in rather better style than when she came out of the mortar bed.

That was the first and last time she tried to ride a tricycle.

"Thim things is an invintion av the divil, be heavens, and av yez get me riding an wan av thim agin, yez can call me a Dootchman," said Muldoon.

The ruined wheel was left where it had fallen, and whether it was ever of any use except as barbed wire I cannot tell.

Nobody knew exactly how it came about, but the story of Muldoon's great ride got around among the gang, and they all made allusions to it for weeks to come, till Muldoon got sick of the subject, and swore he would paralyze the next man who mentioned it.

"At any rate, pop," said Roger, in alluding to the matter, "you can't lay your misfortune at my door. I never told you to ride a bicycle."

"No, be heavens, ye did not," retorted Muldoon, "and it is to that circumstance that ye owe yer still bein' alive, me bye."

"Well, you're pretty lucky in being so yourself, pop," said Roger, with a laugh.

"Oho, the fairies are always good to the Irish, yez knows," chuckled Muldoon.

It came about, in the course of a few days, that Muldoon met the Hon. Mike Growler and Mr. Burns, the poet, one afternoon as he was going home, and the two accosted him.

"Hallo, Mul, old sport, how goes it?"

"Ah, my esteemed compatriot and co-adjutor, it gives me extreme pleasure to behold your intelligent countenance once more, and to be assured—"

"Cut it short, Hippocrates, I know what yez mean, but I have not a cint. How are yez, Mike?"

"Bloomin', you bet," replied the Lily of Nevada, puffing at a big cigar. "Say, we are goin' up to see der game. Are yer comin'?"

"Phwat game do yez refer to, me Western friend? Is it the ball game, yez mean?"

"O' course. Ain't yer comin'?"

"Who plays? Is it the Bostons?"

"Cert, and der New Yorkies is goin' ter knock 'em out. See?"

"Is me friend, Mike Kelly, catching?"

"Why, cert."

"Thin I'll go. Yez may not know that I have been a ball player mesilf, and wor captain av wan av the foineest teams thravelin'."

"Why, cert, I heard all about it."

"I can play anny position yez can name; pitch, catch, fill all the bases, play short, right, left or cinther, and as for batting—"

"Oh, you're a lulu, o' course," snooted Mike, "but come on up and see der game."

They went up, and got a seat on the grand stand, well up in front and a bit on the side.

"Why don't dey put der wire screen funder around?" asked Mike, presently. "I'm a bomb-proof old terror, I am, but I don't want no foul balls flyin' dis way for a little bit. See?"

"Faix, yez'll be all right, Mike," said Muldoon, cheerfully. "Nothing is goin' to hurt yez. There won't no balls come this way."

"I donno 'bout it. I seen 'em come dis way lots der oder day."

"Well, I'm an old ball player mesilf, Mr. Growler, and yez can depind upon me to catch all that comes along, d'ye mind?"

"All right, let her go."

The game, presently began, and both Muldoon and Mike were greatly interested therein, and were prepared to "root" most energetically for the home team.

The Bostons went to the bat first and the great Kelly handled the stick.

"I'll bet a dollar yez get sthruck out, Mike," cried Muldoon.

"Keep your eye on the ball, Mul," laughed the ten-thousand-dollar beauty, who was well acquainted with the Solid Man.

The ball was out of sight so far as hitting it went and Kelly wasn't in it.

He tried hard, but that six-footed Rusie was too many for him.

The great Michael struck out and a wail went up from the gilded dome on Beacon Hill when the news came.

The Bostons got a blank in that inning, and then the Giants came to the scratch.

Georgie Gore and his sweet smile went to the bat and popped up a fly, which little Tommy Tucker collared and dusted with to first.

"Now thin, Buck, show thim phwere ye live," shouted Muldoon, as Captain Ewing stepped up to the plate.

Sweet William swiped at the first ball that Clarkson sent towards him.

He hit it, but it flew up and towards the rear.

Mr. Growler saw the ball flying his way and ducked.

"Catch it, Mul!" he yelled.

Muldoon did catch it.

Not with his hands, however.

He made a bluff to do so, but missed.

Where he did catch it was right in the eye.

"Howly mackerel, I'm blinded!" he yelled, as he rolled off his seat.

"Well, you're a la-la, you are," remarked the Western celebrity. "Tort yer was

it, Tommy made a run and sent in another.

"Well, you're a hoodoo and no error, you are!" remarked the Hon. Mike. "Look-er wot yer done now!"

"Phwat's that?" asked Muldoon, ruefully swabbing off his nose.

"Let dem ducks get even on us—dat's wot!"

"Faix, I couldn't help it."

"Yes, yer could," snorted Mike.

"As how?"

"Tort yer was goin' ter catch all dem fouls?"

"I cot that wan, be heavens."

could not rattle that redhead the least bit. One day, however, Muldoon stirred up a pretty fracas among the women.

He had to go up on the roof to see about a telegraph wire which Nibbsey had told him some men were going to fasten to it without first asking his permission.

"I'm blowed av I allow anny grinding monopoly av a tiligraph comp'ny to use me properly at their convanience, be heavens, widout axin' permission, and not aven thin," he sputtered as he started up.

On the second floor he heard a great racket above.

The Finnegan and Piscatelli ladies were having an argument.



Then the men pulled him and his wife out of the mortar pile. They were a sight to behold, separately and together. Plastered with mortar from head to foot, they looked more like stone images than human beings.

goin' ter catch all der balls dat come dis way?"

"Oh, glory, me eye is dhruv clane into me head," muttered Muldoon.

The ball was tossed in and the game went on, but Muldoon did not pay much attention to it for several minutes.

Then he found that the New Yorks were ahead.

"Faix, that's all right thin," he observed.

"O' course it's all right!" said Mr. Growler. "We're goin' ter get there, Mul. See?"

"Thin I don't mind me eye bein' hurted at all, and, in fact, I don't think it is," was the answer.

The game went on, and after a few innings had been played the bean-eaters tied the score.

Just before they did so little Tommy Tucker was at the bat.

"Here's where yez strike out, Tommy!" cried Muldoon.

Tommy immediately knocked a foul in Muldoon's direction.

Once more the great man caught it.

This time he got it on the nose.

The vital fluid made its appearance at once, and while Muldoon was staunching

"Yes, yer did! Yer a Jonah, yer are. Get off der earth."

"Niver mind, we'll bate thim yet," said Muldoon, hopelessly.

On that occasion, however, the Giants were not on deck.

The men from Boston walked off with the game and all Gotham felt very blue.

Muldoon took home a bonny black eye and a bruised nose, together with the mortification of having seen his pets defeated.

"It wor all Mike Growler's fault," he sadly observed. "Av I'd been alone the Yorkies would have won, begob, but that ould stuff is enough to spoil anything."

Nibbsey got onto that eye that evening, and he was heard softly singing a few minutes afterwards as he went to open the front door; something about two jolly black eyes in connection with a pleasant surprise.

"Faix, I'll murder that bye," growled Muldoon, but he didn't, just the same.

It could not be expected that Muldoon could get along all this time without getting into a row with the women in his flats, and he had not.

The rows had not amounted to very much, however, as Muldoon had left most of the business lately to Nibbsey, and you

"Go an, ye dirty Dago, it wasn't me at all, I tell yez."

"Yesa ita was youa filla de tub, splasha de wat', make all run down, cracka de plast', falla on me, smasha my—"

"Go an, I say, it wor not me at all. I niver use the tubs on Chuesda', and don't yez be givin' me anny more av yer guff. Sure, it's tired I—"

"You tella lie, me see wat' comea down, cracka de plast', falla all overa me, geta in my eye, breaka—"

"I tell yez I niver used the tubs the day. Go an up and jaw the Dootchwoman and don't be—"

"Ladies, ladies, I'm surprised at yez," said Muldoon, coming up. "Now do be quite, both av yez, and settle yere diffucilities in a more moderate way and don't be makin' a hurrah av it."

"You minda youra bees', Irisha loaf', me no wanta heara froma you, you keepa still," sputtered the Italian woman.

"It's nothin' to ye at all, so it's not, and av yez want ter come up here, yez'd better kape yer ugly mouth closed," chimed in Madame Finnegan, taking sides with her late enemy against the common foe.

"Now, ladies, ladies, that's not at all

polite, yez knows," said Muldoon, trying to avoid a row. "Yez must be careful about the wather, Mrs. Finnegan, and ye, Mrs. Friccadelli, yez have a right to watch and let people know before it gets so bad that the ceiling—"

"She's a liar!" bellowed Madame Finnegan, "and it's a fool ye are to pay anny attintion to what the likes av her says. I'm a dacint woman, so I am, and I niver do let the wather slop over in the—"

"You comea in my kitch', I showa you. You see eef I tella you lie. She tella lie sheself, I tella you. I showa you wherea de wat' comea in—"

"Well, well, ladies, I hope you won't say anny more about it. I'll take yer words,

Frau Schumacher in a shrill key from the top floor.

"*Mon Dieu*, such a racket I nevaire hear. I teenk ze house fall," put in the French-woman.

She and Schumacher had both come out to see what the trouble was.

"Stop shoving me, ye tarrier," yelled the Finnegan. "Go talk to the Dootch sausage up there."

"Ach, you insolt me, Ierish? For why you mage dot recket once?"

"Go an, ye fat swab and don't talk to me. It's ye that's always gitting me in trouble, so it is."

"Ach! I tort you was been grazzy already. I make me some business mit you

His high dicer was smashed, he got cracks on the hands and nose, and his fine black coat was covered with flour.

"Be heavens, it's killed I am!" he exclaimed, making a break.

He escaped by the way of Mike Growler's flat and the fire-escape, and then from the yard to the cellar. When he reached the office, his assistant was not visible.

"Be heavens, I see it all!" he muttered. "The bye sint me up there on a false scint, so that thim women wud make it hot for me, but begob, what I got will be nothing to the equatorial reception he'll have whin next I meet the young joker. He'll think he's having a seance wid a siven times heated furnace, so he will."



Muldoon's eyes began to get big as the needle flew about, but they got bigger yet when the thing suddenly recorded three hundred pounds, the highest it could go. "Be heavens, I must be getting bloated!" exclaimed Muldoon, staring at the dial in great excitement.

both av yez, but don't let it occur again."

"It's not the wather from me tubs at all, and she knows it. Sure, I'm a dacint woman, and iverything is always quiet and respectable in me flat, and she do have no call—"

"Whata youa calla quiet? Youra daught' alla time dancea jig on floor, pounda pian', makea de scream, tinka she seeng, alla same like cat on fence, miaow!"

"How dar' ye call me daughter's foine singing screeching? Sure, I've a mind—"

"Now thin, don't say annything more about it, Mrs. Finnegan, but go an upstairs to yer work and I'll investigate the matther meself, and ye, Mrs. Dizzygilly, av there's anny cause av complaint—"

"There's not!"

"Irishawoman no good."

"Ah, rats!"

"You eata, Irisha tarrier."

"Now thin, do kape quiet," said Muldoon, pushing the irascible Irishwoman up-stairs in front of him.

She went protesting, but she went all the same, while the signora continued to call her pet names.

"Mein chiminies, for why you mage all dot noise once already now yet?" cried

not any dimes und you saidt I gife you drubbles mit—"

They were all talking at once now and the rest of the women in the house came out to see what it was all about.

Muldoon went up on the roof to escape it but it did not stop immediately.

After jawing each other a little longer, the women all came to the conclusion that Muldoon was the cause of the whole thing.

The combination janitor and landlord looked the roof over very carefully but could find no traces of any wires having been laid or about to be laid on or across it.

"Faix, I don't see anything," he muttered. "Maybe they've not got to work yet but I'm glad I came up annyhow."

When he had got half way down he was sorry.

Suddenly, from above, down the stairway well came a shower of all sorts of miscellaneous objects.

There was a rolling-pin, a wet dish towel, several clothes-pins, a lot of potatoes, about a bushel of kindling wood, half a pail of coal and several other things.

Muldoon got them all.

PART XVI.

THINGS went on these days at the flats in pretty good shape, simply because Muldoon wouldn't have very much to do with them, but left most everything to the red-headed lieutenant of his.

Now and then he would come in collision with the men of the flats, but that was nothing, and caused no particular vexation of spirit, and could be easily recovered from, being hardly worth mentioning in connection with the rackets he had with those female tenants of his.

Nothing made him madder, and nothing upset him more than a fracas of that sort, his well known geniality being no proof against the innate cussedness of a lot of cranky women.

One day in particular they made it warm for him, and it was not a cool season just then by any means.

The sun shone on the back of the house after a certain time in the morning and Muldoon happened to go into the yard soon after it was getting in its fine work.

Chancing to look up he was very much surprised at what he saw.

My lady Finnegan, on the fourth floor,

had rigged up an awning on the fire-escape and there she sat enjoying herself in the shade thereof, while she did the weekly washing.

If any one had desired to come down the ladder, they could not have done so, for she had shut off communication above and below.

Muldoon had expressed himself concerning the leaving of washtubs on the platforms, but now Mrs. Finnegan had gone a step farther in the way of rigging up an awning.

"Well, I must say I like the impudence av her," he muttered.

The lady Finnegan was not the only one who had her tub on the landing, but no one had as yet imitated her in the awning line.

"Yez hav the cheek av a harse, Mrs. Finnegan," bawled Muldoon. "Take that thing away out av that."

The lady heard but paid no attention to her landlord.

"I say, ould woman Finnegan, did yez hear phwat I said?" cried Muldoon, in a louder tone.

Mrs. Finnegan leaned over the railing, regarding Muldoon in silent contempt for a minute, and then answered:

"Faix, I h'ard yer v'ice, ye ould crank, but I'm used to that be this toime. Phwy don't yez get it sand-papered and take the rough edge off it?"

"Niver mind me v'ice, Finnegan," retorted Muldoon. "I know I'm not an operry singer, and wan screecher in the flats is enough. Did yez hear phwat I said? That's more important than me bein' a Niccolini or a De Risky. It's the worruds not the tone yez want to pay attention to."

"Faix, I don't worry me head over phwat ye do be sayin' at all," answered that aggressive Irish lady, wringing out a dish towel.

She was not at all particular to fondle the thing over the tub, and some of the water fell on Muldoon.

"Howly fiddler! phat are yez doin'?" yelled the latter. "Take that tub aff ther laddher and take down ther fancy awnin' yez have up!"

"Begorry, I'll not," and Mrs. Finnegan gave the tub a tip, quite by accident, of course.

Down came a lot of water, but Muldoon did not get all of it.

The signora had come out upon the landing a moment before to see what Muldoon was talking about.

She heard him shouting, imagined that he was trying to stir up a quarrel with herself, and so went out to give him a jawing.

The water that Madame Finnegan spilled took her in the back of the neck as she leaned over the railing to give Muldoon a piece of her mind.

It was not cold water, either, it is worth remarking.

You could have boiled an egg in it with neatness and dispatch.

"Hol' Sant' Pete! whata for youa chuck de wat?" she yelled, jumping back. "I tella my man, he smasha you nosel!"

"Luck out there!" cried Muldoon, jumping aside. "See phwat yez have done, ye clumsy tarrier! Do yez want to scald us all?"

"Irishaman, Irishawoman, no good, alla time fight—alla time makea de rack—getta up de fuss—givea everabod' trouble—no gooda. Morea bett' go back to Ireeland—sheep sinka in wat', alla drown!" protested Mrs. Piscatelli, giving it impartially to Muldoon and Mrs. Finnegan.

"Faix, it's nothin' to ye av I want to upset a whole tub av water, ye ould black-muzzled stale-beer dhrinker!" retorted Mrs. Finnegan.

To prove her disregard for her neighbor's protests, she gave the tub another tilt.

Down slopped a painful of water, but it fortunately missed the signora.

The Hon. Mike Growler's lady had just come out to the fire-escape to see who was talking.

She got the ducking intended for the Italian woman.

First she sputtered, then she choked, and then she began to abuse Muldoon.

"I think yez might be in better business, Terry Muldoon, than to call me out and thin squirt wather on me!" she said.

"Go an, Mary Ann; it wasn't me at all!" Just then out came that young terror, Romeo Growler.

"Ah, what yer givin' us, old gorilla?" he snorted. "Didn't I seen yer meself? Say, is dis de day dey let de monks out? Where is de I-talian dat owns yer? Where's de white horse, anyway, Old Baldy? Go get yer face mended; it's cracked!"

"How dar' yez talk to me like that, ye young thramp?" yelled Mrs. Finnegan, taking the allusion to red hair as being directed against herself. "Yez hav no more manners than a pig, and niver had. Go tell yer mother to pay the rint, ye crooked-faced young vilyan!"

In her excitement Mrs. Finnegan gave the tub another tip without intending it.

Down fell a lot of water, and also some soiled clothes.

All hands below her got soaked, and Muldoon ran in to avoid a deluge.

"Let thim fight it out thimselves, be heavens! I'll not have anny more av it!" he muttered.

As he went in he heard a chorus of angry voices.

Every woman in the house was out on the fire-escape by this time, all jawing each other.

The Dutch and French ladies on the top floor wanted to know why the rest could not keep quiet, Dan's wife and her dog tried to see who could make the most noise, and the Major's better half jawed Mrs. Burns simply because the latter was the most convenient person to talk to.

"It's all that vilyan Muldoon's fault," cried Mrs. Finnegan. "He do be all the time harassin' me."

Then Miss Finnegan began to play "You Know a Thing or Two" off the key, and the confusion became worse confounded.

They all agreed that it was Muldoon who had caused the fracas, and they all went down to interview him upon the subject.

He was in the office when the whole posse broke in upon him.

The racket they made was enough to paralyze any one.

All hands talked at once, and in the loudest possible key.

"Howly poker! phwat do yez all want?" he bawled. "Faix, av I lived forty foot undher ground, yez'd deafen me wid yer racket."

"Dem women makes me tired," softly warbled Nibbsey, who sat on a stool in a corner.

"Irishawoman no gooda, puta outa de flat."

"Faix, it's not me at all," howled Finnegan.

"Yis, it is!" roared Muldoon, making himself heard above the din. "It's ye that's always makin' trouble. Av yez done yer washin' insoide it 'ud be all right, but yez hov to be so dom high toned that nothin's good enough for yez and yez must pit up an awnin' too, be heavens, as if annything cud spoil that mud-colored complexion av yours."

The others laughed, for they did not admire the Finnegan woman any more than Muldoon did.

"Goodness only knows, I'd like to have things quite and peaceable," Muldoon went on, getting mad, "but ye won't let me, wid that bawlin' gerral av yours that'll niver get on the stage in forty years wid the face and the v'ice she have, and yer own sweet timper that makes me think Finnegan must be shtone blind and deaf or he'd had a divorce from yez before iver he wor married, be heavens!"

Muldoon was fighting mad now and he waxed eloquent.

He gave it to my lady Finnegan in fine style, and somehow or other she hadn't a word to say.

It was funny, too, but on this occasion he enlisted the sympathy of all the rest, although they had come down there to give him fits.

They were just tickled to death to hear him haul their quarrelsome neighbor over the coals, for his sentiments were their own.

As for the cause of the fracas, she was simply stupefied.

She knew that Muldoon was telling the truth, and she could not retaliate just a little.

Young Nibbsey presently came to the rescue of his boss.

"Ah, rats!" he suddenly said. That cleaned out the crowd better than if he had offered to do that song and dance for their benefit.

There was a wild scramble for the door, several dresses were badly torn and ripped, but the women got away and Muldoon was left alone, hot, cross, and all used up.

Shortly after this the Hon. Mike, Dan Muldoon, Mr. Burns, the poet, and the walking delegate called on Muldoon and invited him out.

Not to lunch or to gargle his throat or to fight a duel, but simply to go out and take a walk.

Muldoon had hardly recovered from the effect of his matinee with the women of the flats, and he felt desperate enough to do anything.

"Come on, Mul, old sport," said the Nevada Lily, bursting in upon Muldoon in full bloom; "come out fer a walk. Yer look rocky, yer do, and yer want bracin' up."

The breezy statesman was got up in all his gorgeousness with a shiny hat, a pronounced suit of clothes, a big lily in his coat and his twenty karat diamond shining in all its native refulgence.

"Be heavens, I don't care av I do," said Muldoon; "me brain is that disordered wid this and that and the other. I'm wid yez, me dizzy old cyclone."

Leaving directions to Nibbsey to take care of the place, our landlord sauntered forth in company with Mr. Growler.

Dan, Edward Geoghegan and Mr. Burns were just outside and they joined the procession as soon as it began to move.

The old war horse, Major Buster, of Georgia, met them on the first corner, not by preconcerted arrangement, but simply by accident.

The Major's eyes twinkled when he saw that crowd and he determined to join it.

His bibulous tendencies were quickened by the sight of the gang, and his roving optics began to water and his crimson sluggers to scintillate at the thought of numerous invitations to partake which would be accepted without any necessity of reciprocating.

"Ah, ge'men, pleased to meet yo'. Ah might say chahmed, egad. Good-mo'inn', Mistah Muldoon, good mo'nin', sah, sah to yo' sah, senatah, the same to yo', Mistah Burns, pleased to meet you all, egad."

"Yer ain't gladder to see me than I are to see you, blow me if yer are," said Mike. "I'm an old aristocrat, I am, but I'm glad to see yer all der same. Will yer join us in a smile?"

That was just what the Major would do, and he annexed himself to that coterie of old sports in short order.

Off they started, two and two, Muldoon and Mike leading, Dan and the walking delegate following and the Major and the poet bringing up the rear.

They stopped once or twice to sample different kinds of tonics, and then went on as before.

Mr. Burns was beginning to get in a poetic vein, and wanted to quote some of his lyrics to the Major, while Dan and Mr. Geoghegan talked about the wrongs of the workingman, and got quite worked up over them.

Muldoon and Mike cared nothing for lyrics or labor problems, being more interested in the base-ball championship, or the favorites of the turf.

On went that crowd on their travels, and the next thing that interested them was a man selling Frankfort sausages, red hot, two for five, mustard included, a whole meal for half a dime, a regular Coney Island snap, with the sand and the surf, the yelling children and the blazing sun left out.

"Here you go, hot Frankfurters, only a nickel!" yelled the man with the stand, as the party of strollers came up.

"Now, who wud want hot sausages a day like this?" asked Muldoon, as the Hon. Mike stopped. "Come an wid yez, Mike."

"I'm a old sea dog, with tar on me fists, and when I get on shore I always goes fur der hot sausage stands," said Mr. Growler.

"Yis, I've h'ard that dogs always hov a

feller feeling for sausages," returned Muldoon.

"Phwat are yez shtopping here for?" demanded Dan.

"I'm givin' Mike a p'inter, but he wants a sausage."

"Dat's doggone bad," observed the statesman from Nevada.

"Yis, it wor a dog gone whin the sausage wor made," said Muldoon. "Come an and don't be wasting me time over nothing."

"Dem ain't sausages, Mul," said Mike, "dey're oysters."

"Yis, right-handed ones, I suppose," replied Muldoon, with a wise look. "Ye can't sand-paper me, Mr. Growler. I'm on to yez. Thim is left-handed sausages."

"Ah, no dey ain't, dey're oysters. You don't know nothing."

Just then the sausage man thought it was his cue to speak.

"If youse ducks want buy sumpin', why don't yer buy sumpin', and not stand round keepin' away business?" he asked.

The Hon. Mike shoved out his mustache, cocked his high hat on one ear, looked very dangerous, and asked out of one corner of his big mouth:

"Soy, do yer know who yer a-talkin' to, young feller?"

"No, I don't, and I don't want," said the sausage vender.

"I'm a spotted boy constructor from der wilds o' Yucatan, I am, and when I twist me tail around a feller yer kin hear der bones crack."

The sausage young man was evidently not at all impressed by the terrible remarks of the Lily of Nevada.

"Maybe yer kin, but yer don't twist me for a cent," he answered. "If you want a sausage, say so, and don't give us no guff. Hot Frankfurters, gents, only a fi'pence, a whole meal for a nickel, here you go now, who's de next man, here you go, all for a nickel."

"Begob, yez can't paralyze him for nothin', Mike," laughed Muldoon. "He knows yez."

The rest of the gang laughed and Mr. Growler felt that his reputation was at stake.

"Don't yer give me no guff, young feller," he growled, looking as tough as he could. "I'm a weepin' willer tree and I bloom best over fresh made graves, I do, and I'll be bloomin' over yours in two shakes if yer gimme any lip."

"Yes, yer will!" but the tone indicated otherwise. "Do yer know wot you are? Yer a old stuff, dat's wot, and yer can't scare me just a little bit."

The next thing those perambulators struck was a penny-in-the-slot machine in front of a cigar store.

It was one of the kind that give your correct weight for a cent, without any frills on it, no playing tunes, or taking your photograph, or scenting your handkerchief, or anything of that sort, but just a plain, every-day weighing machine.

"Be heavens, I think I'll thry me weight," said Muldoon. "It's a long time since I had anny record av it, and I'm interested to know just phwat it is."

"I'm a dizzy old guessing machine with nickel trimmin's and a ivory handle," remarked the Hon. Mike, "and I put it down at two hundred and six."

"I think that an even two hundred would come nearer to the actual ponderosity of our esteemed friend," warbled Mr. Burns, with a fine Delsartean gesture.

"Go an wid yez both," snorted Muldoon. "I don't come within twenty-five pounds av that."

"Faix, I don't think yez do, Terry," said Dan, "but it's the other way. Ye'll go two hundred and thirty pounds av yez go wan."

"No, sah, not at all, sah, he won't weigh half that," said the Major. "Mah good friend Muldoon is losing flesh, sah, yas, sah, by gad."

"Talk comes pretty cheap, but der figgers won't tell no fairy tales," remarked Mr. Growler, with a wink to the others. "Get on der old machine, Mul, and put in yer cent and see wot she says."

Muldoon stepped on the scales, dropped in his cent, and awaited developments.

The pointer on the dial in front of him began to act in a most erratic manner.

It began to dance up and down from a hundred and twenty back to forty, and then up again to two hundred and forty.

"Howly fiddler! I must have an awful fit av the shakes," said Muldoon. "Phwat's the matther with the thing anyhow?"

The matter was that nearly all those jokers had their toes on the platform of the machine.

Muldoon's eyes began to get big as the needle flew about, but they got bigger yet when the thing suddenly recorded three hundred pounds, the highest it could go.

"Be heavens, I must be getting bloated!" exclaimed Muldoon, staring at the dial in great excitement.

Then of a sudden the needle flopped back to nothing and refused to move.

Muldoon took a tumble at that and looked around.

PART XVII.

MULDOON turned around. He had an idea that those chums of his were monkeying with the weighing machine.

Nothing of the sort was evident, however.

They were all standing with their backs to him and gazing abstractedly across the street.

"What wan av yez hodooed the weighing machine?" asked Muldoon.

None of the crowd pleaded guilty to the count.

They did not even seem to have heard the question.

"Some av yez hov been foolin' wid the thing, and now I've lost me cint and don't know phwat me weight is aither."

As little attention was paid to this remark as to the first.

Then Muldoon thought of something which would be sure to arouse the gang.

"Wud yez like a drink, anny of yez?" he asked.

The question put new life into the crowd. "We would!" they all cried, in a breath, whisking around.

All they seen of Muldoon was his back, and he seemed to be attentively studying the dial of the weighing machine.

"Never mind der old machine, Mul," said the Hon. Mike. "I'll give yer a cent if yer want ter be weighed. Come on and give us der drink."

"Faix, I think the thing is busted annyhow," remarked Dan, smacking his lips, "but I know I cud enj'y a little ould rye very nicely."

"Yas, sah, just my sentiments, sah," put in the Major. "Mistah Muldoon always did have a taking way with him, sah."

"I am myself aware of a vacuum in the regions below the thorax which would feel better if filled with a little *spiritus frumenti*," added Mr. Burns, the poet.

All this time Muldoon was studying the machine.

"Faix, I must be as light as air," he now muttered. "I don't see that the needle has moved wan point."

"Ah, go on, never mind der machine," snorted Mike, "but come on and git der drink."

"Is it an invitation ye're givin' me, Mr. Growler?" asked Muldoon, turning around. "Naw, of course not. Yer ast us, didn't yer?"

"Me, is it?"

"Cert."

"Whin wor that?"

"Just now."

"I axed yez to have a drink?"

"O' course; all of us."

"No, sor."

"Yes, yer did."

"I axed yez all did yez want a drink?"

"Well, we do!" they all shouted.

"Then go get it av yez want it so bad. I said nothing at all about taking annything at my ixpinse."

That gang felt as if it had been sold out. Muldoon got down from the platform and walked away, while all the gang looked sad.

"Well, I'm a grizzly old traveler, I am, and I've seen many rocky tings," said Mr. Growler, "but I never seen a cooler shake dan dat."

"It's puffedkiy outrageous, sah!" sputtered Major Buster.

"I niver thot Terry wud be so mean," put in Dan.

"Let me recite you a verse of my new poem, which seems to fit the occasion," suggested Mr. Burns.

"He'd ought to be b'ycotted, so he'd ought," muttered Edward Geoghegan, while the rest hurried along, evidently fearing that Burns would carry out his threat.

Muldoon shook the gang that time and went off by himself to have a quiet little lunch and a smoke at a place where he sometimes dropped in.

As he was entering the same, Roger came up, being bound on the same errand.

"Hallo, pop!" said the young fellow. "Going in for lunch?"

"I am, that, and ye seem to be doin' the same, me bye."

"Suppose we get a table together, dad?"

"Sure, I've no objections, Roger. How comes it you're not at home?"

"Detained down-town, and Kitty has gone to a mat. You aren't at home yourself, either, governor?"

"No, seeing that I'm here. Will yez have an appetizer before the soup?"

"Don't care if I do, dad, as the fellow said."

"Phwat fellow wor that, and phwat did they want him to do?" asked Muldoon, and Roger laughed.

"It's no conundrum, pop," he said, "but only a manner of speaking."

"Oho! thim maybe yez don't care if yez don't have one."

"Oh, yes, I do."

After the appetizers came a neat little lunch, which both enjoyed, and they sipped their coffee and smoked while talking about the weather.

Presently Roger got up, took down his hat, and said:

"Excuse me, pop, I've got an engagement I forgot about. I'll see you later."

Then the young fellow walked out, stopping at the desk for a moment to settle the bill apparently.

Muldoon drank his coffee, finished his cigar, and then got up to go out. As he passed the desk, the cashier said politely:

"Beg pardon, sir, but the bill is not paid."

"Phwat's that?" asked Muldoon, in surprise.

"Of course it was an oversight—pray pardon me for mentioning it," said the cashier.

"But sure the bill is ped already," said Muldoon.

"No, sir; pardon me, but it's not; merely an oversight, of course."

"But me son ped it when he wint out just now."

"Oh, no, sir; beg pardon, but he said that you would pay it."

"Oh, he did?" said Muldoon, knowing that Roger was quite capable of playing him such a trick.

"You surely do not doubt my word, sir?" said the cashier, apologetically, mistaking Muldoon's tone.

"Indeed, I do not, and I'll pay the bill, but, be heavens! I'll settle with the young vilyan when I meet him. He put both accounts into wan, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, quite right, sir, he said you would settle with both. Pardon my calling your attention to it, but business is business, you know."

"Yis, I know," muttered Muldoon, taking a bank-note from his waistcoat pocket and smoothing it out upon the counter, "and that young robber's business is making a fool av his too confiding father. Faix, I ought to have tumbled, but I didn't, begorry."

He paid the bill, received his change and a smile from the urbane cashier, and walked out, remarking to himself:

"That's twict I've been done to-day and neither party wor aware av what the other done. Faix, I think this must be wan av me unlucky days."

He had not gone more than three or four blocks than he met a soberly-dressed man with a shabby-looking black hat and a white tie, who grabbed him by the hand and exclaimed effusively:

"Why, how are ye, Mr. Muldoon? Well, well, it's glad I am to see ye and looking so well. How are all the folks, Mrs. Muldoon and Roger and Mary Ann and yer

brother and the grandfather? Sure, it's a pleasant surprise, so it is, to see ye. How's everybody?"

"Faix, he seems to know me well enough and all me folks," thought Muldoon, "but I'll be blamed av I know him all the same."

The man in black was still shaking Muldoon's hand and repeating the questions he had already asked.

"Oh, I'm well, and so's the missus and Roger," said Muldoon, wondering if he would ever get his hand loose.

"Well, well, that's good," with another shake, "and how's the grandfather?"

"Sure, he's dead these many years, the Lord love him."

mim'ry fails to place yez in the category av avin me spakin' acquaintances."

"Ye and me wor friends once," said the man in black, sadly.

"Maybe so."

"And now yez don't know me?"

"Sure, I don't," sputtered Muldoon, impatiently, "and there's small chance I ever will av yez don't give me yer name. I might remimber yez thin, but not without."

"Why, me name is Lannigan, and I used to supply ye wid fresh milk and eggs when you kep' a boarding-house down in the Bend, so I did!"

"Oh, sure, so you did, and what are you doin' now?"

"Yes."

"Go an."

"Take off your hat," said Lannigan, removing his own at the same time.

Muldoon obeyed, holding his shining dicer in his hand.

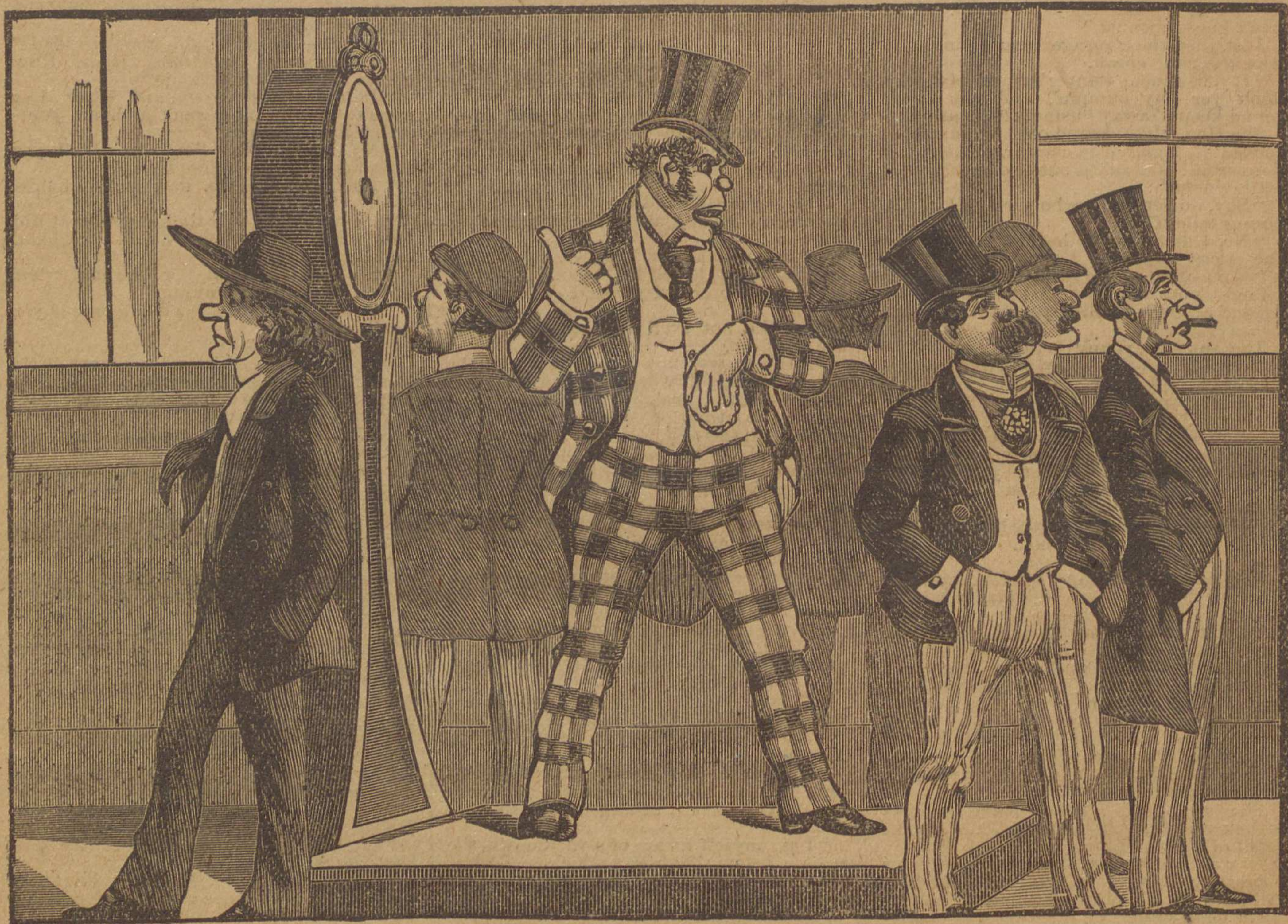
"You see, here's a ten-dollar bill," said Lannigan, holding up a wad of something that looked like a folded bill. "Now I will put this in me hat."

"Yes. I perceive."

"Now, if ye will pit a dollar note in yer own hat, I will proceed wid the trick."

"All right," said Muldoon, putting the money in his hat.

"Now, give me both hats, me own in me right hand, yours in me left—so."



They were all standing with their backs to him and gazing abstractedly across the street. "What wan av yez hoodooed the weighing machine?" asked Muldoon. None of the crowd pleaded guilty to the count.

"Yedon't tell me!" and another shake; "and how's Dan?"

"Oh, he's the same as ever. He's married and livin' in—"

"Really now! Well, well, and how's Mary Ann?" and the pump-handle kept at work.

"She's all right and married to an old stuff be the name of Mike Growler, and — Be heavens, man, don't dislocate me arrum intirely!" broke off Muldoon, patience having long ceased to be a virtue. "Who are ye, annyhow? Troth, I don't know yez from Julius Cayser, and if I did that's no raison why yez need render me limb from limb, begob."

"Sure, ye must know me, Terry?" said the man, releasing Muldoon's hand, which the Solid Man promptly put in his pocket.

"Well, then, I don't."

"But ye must."

"And I tell yez I don't. I have no recollection av yer countenance whatever."

"Sure, ye're not the man to go back an yer friends, Terrence?"

"Maybe I'm not, but I don't remember yez at all."

"Think."

"Faix, I've been thinking, and me

"I'm a professional."

"A professional what? Sure, ye're not an actor?"

"No. I'm a juggler."

"Oh, I understand! Ye used to make me think that door-knobs wor eggs, and that chalk wor milk, avin in thin days. Ye wor a juggler then, if I don't mistake."

"Yis, I'm a juggler," said the other, paying no attention to Muldoon's slightly satirical remarks.

"Do yez make yer appearance in New York or are yez on the road?" asked Muldoon, wondering how much he was expected to contribute to the seedy man's exchequer.

"I have just finished an engagement and next week I have me benefit. I suppose ye would like to take a few tickets, just for old times, Terry?"

"How much are they?"

"A dollar, with a reserved seat. I suppose you will want at least five?"

"Well, no more than that," said Muldoon, hastily, glad to escape so easily.

"Be the way, I'll show ye a trick," said Lannigan, "that ye may get an idee av me talents."

"A trick, is it?"

"Yis—go an."

"The trick is to change the bills from one hat to the other without bringing me hands together or touching the hats."

"Yez can't do it."

"We'll see," said the juggler, holding the two hats at arm's length. "Hallico balico, hocus pocus, zipp! There, the bills are changed."

"Yez don't mean it?"

"Yes. Look and see."

Muldoon looked at both hats.

"I don't see anny difference," he exclaimed.

"Take the bill out av your hat."

"Yis, I have it and it's the wan that I put in meself."

"Really?"

"Yis."

"Drop it in me own hat and I'll put them both in yours."

"Ye will?"

"Yis."

"Proceed," and Muldoon began to get interested.

The juggler said over his talismanic words once more.

"Now, thin, aren't they both in your hat?"

"They are not—they are in yours."
"Put them both in your hat thin and I'll change them to mine."

Muldoon did as requested, and the juggler started in again.

"Hocus pocus, zip! amalgamation chloroform, biff! Did yez see them go?"

"I did not."

"Well, they did just the same, and they are now in my hat. Please examine the other."

With that the juggler put Muldoon's hat on his head and handed his own to our hero.

"There's nothing at all in your hat," said Muldoon, gazing intently into the hat.

sucker as long as I live, I'd like to know?"

He did not see Mr. Growler again on that day, and on the next, having provided himself with a new hat, he did not think it expedient to play the trick, inasmuch as the Hon. Mike came in wearing a dilapidated dicer.

"You gave us fellers der fine shake yes-day, didn't yer, Mul?" asked Mike, as he came slouching into the office in the morning.

"How wor that?" asked Muldoon. "I thot yez fellers shook me. I wor nearly thrun off the scales."

"Ah, yer know what I mean well enough," muttered Mr. Growler, nearly biting his cigar in two. "Yer axed us all

"De boss never did know what was good," observed Nibbsey, as he disappeared with mop and pail, and Muldoon himself had to smile.

"Got a cigar, Mul?" asked Mike.

"I hov."

"Den gimme it."

"But not to give away," added Muldoon.

"Ah, you go West!" growled Mike, much disappointed. "You're a nice relation to have, you are."

"I say, Mike, I'll give yez a cigar if ye can do a trick I'll give yez. You see your hat?"

"Yes, of course."



Muldoon stuck his head out from behind the chimney, to take a survey of the situation. "Aha! is it there ye are?" he muttered. "Be heavens, av this wor only me own house now." "Ha, ha! down with the Turks and hurrah for the wild West!" yelled the man.

The juggler said nothing and Muldoon looked again.

"Troth, yez didn't do the trick at all," he muttered. Then he looked up.

Lannigan was half way down the block, walking rapidly.

"Howld on, yez didn't do the trick," he bawled.

"Yis, I did; that's your hat and this is mine."

Muldoon examined the hat more closely. It was not his hat at all, but the shabby one that Lannigan had been wearing.

"Faix, this is not me hat at all," he muttered; "it's his and—Howly peddler! the money is my hat, so it is."

By that time the juggler had turned the corner.

"Be heavens, he has me hat and the dollar as well," muttered Muldoon, hurrying after his facetious friend.

When he got to the corner the ex-milkman was not to be seen.

"Faix, that's three strikes on me," remarked Muldoon, highly disgusted, "and I'd better go to the binch. Begorry, I'll work that gag on Mike Growler the next time I see um. Will I never stop bein' a

ter drink and den give us der shake, dat's wot."

"Well, I've known yez ter shake fer drinks before now, Mike," answered Muldoon with a grin.

Young Nibbsey was in the corner wringing a mop into a pail, and he remarked as if to himself:

"Whiskers got his pitcher turned towards de wall dat time, you bet. I take me oat', dat feller gives me a pain."

"None o' yer guff, young feller," said the Hon. Mike, turning around fiercely.

"Ah, what's de matter wid you?" retorted Redhead. "You better go take a swim. You're out o' yer depth, you are."

"Nibbsey!" said Muldoon.

"Yes'r!" said the boy, quickly.

"Go wash thim back cellar windys, and don't be so flip."

"A'right, boss," and away went the youth, warbling:

"Dere's a name dat's never spokin
An' a mudder's heart is brokin,
Dere's anoder—"

"Niver mind yer singing, me bye," interrupted Muldoon. "We can dispensate wid that now and foriver."

"Well, how high is it, be a rough guess?"

"Oh, I donno—'bout a foot, I guess."

"Well, can yez mark the heighth av it on the wall from the floor up?"

"To be course."

"Go on and do it."

The Hon. Mike stooped down and put his finger on a certain point.

"Is that all the high it is?" asked Muldoon.

"Certainly. Yer don't expect I wear a hull length o' stovepipe, do yer?"

"Ye're sure that's right?"

"Why, certainly. I'm a gay old gauger, I am, and I have an eye like an eagle," said Mike, still stooping over, with his finger on the wall.

"Well, keep that mark and put yer hat under it. Don't lave go, but kape yer finger where it is."

"Why, certainly, dat's easy enough," and the Lily of Nevada, bent nearly double, put up his left hand and took off his hat.

Just then Muldoon lifted up his foot and gave Mr. Growler a biff with the side thereof on the seat of his gaudy unmentionables.

Over went Mike, both hands being occupied so that he was unable to steady himself.

His big mustache brushed up the dust of the floor and his nose looked as if it had been sand-papered.

His hat flew in a corner and up he jumped with wrath in his eye.

Muldoon was sitting on the table, but Dan Muldoon, who had just come in, was laughing immoderately.

The Hon. Mike came to the conclusion that it was Dan who had upset him, and he took a speedy revenge by smiting Daniel on the nose.

"Phwat's that for?" asked Dan, his eyes watering and numerous stars floating before his astonished vision.

"Think it's funny, don't yer, to kick a feller over when he's all doubled up and can't do nothing, don't ye?" asked Mr. Growler, in a huff.

"Faix, I did not."

"Ah, go on!"

"I tell yez I did not."

"Den what yer wanten laugh for if yer didn't?"

"Faix, I couldn't help it, yez looked so funny sprawling out like a frog an the flure."

"Oh, I looked funny, did I? Well, I couldn't help hittin' you, nuther—see?"

"That's wan an both av yez," laughed Muldoon; "but whisper, here comes Burns, the pote, down the cellar. Yez can both work the gag an him."

In a moment or two Mr. Burns came in and greeted all hands most effusively.

"Good-morning, gentlemen, good-morning; pleased to see you all," he said, with a fine sweep of his hand. "How is my noble compatriot, Muldoon, this morning?"

"Oh, I'm all right," said Muldoon, carelessly.

Mr. Burns had on a silk hat that morning in place of the soft, broad-brimmed, Buffalo Bill article, which he usually wore, and the Hon. Mike said presently:

"Say, Burnsey, old tough, here's a trick for yer. What's der size of yer dicer?"

"Seven and a quarter, small,—I believe," said Mr. Burns, taking it off and smoothing it.

"Ah, no, dat ain't wot I mean. How high is it?"

"In the neighborhood of eight or nine inches, I should asseverate, Mr. Growler," returned the poet.

"Dat's wot yer think, is it? Well, show us how high it is agin der wall over dere. Bet yer can't."

"Ah, yes I see,—an optical delusion, apparently," said Burns, smiling. "The eye is deceived sometimes, but I will proceed to show you that the eye of the poet, in a fine frenzy rolling, is seldom deceived in a matter—"

"Ah, go on, quit yer chin and put yer finger on der place where yer think yer hat comes."

Mr. Burns stooped down and put his finger against the wall.

"Dat's it, is it?"

"Yes, sir, and I will make a mark that you may see—"

"Never mind dat," said Mike. "Hold yer finger dere tight, so's she won't slip and take off yer hat."

Mr. Burns complied, and was in an interesting half-double position when Mike and Dan each raised one foot.

"Cheese it," sang out Nibbsey, who had come in unobserved.

PART XVIII.

MR. BURNS suddenly jumped forward.

He either heard Nibbsey's warning or suspected something himself.

The result was that Dan and the Hon. Mike kicked nothing.

The result of that was that they both sat down very violently.

Moreover, each tripped up the other, and when they sat down they were very much mixed.

"Get off me collar!" yelled Dan.

"Take yer foot out o' me mouth!"

"Who are yez kicking, anyhow?"

"Lemme get up, yer gorilla's brother!"

Mr. Burns and Muldoon enjoyed the sport exceedingly.

"There seems to be some confusion of limbs as well as tongues," remarked the poet.

"Faix, the trick didn't work as well as as they thot it wud," said Muldoon. "It's a lucky mon ye are, Hippocrates."

"I am, indeed, fortunate in having had my eyes open," returned Burns.

The two wrestlers managed to clear themselves at last and got upon their feet, sorry-looking objects, indeed.

"Wot yer wanten kick so soon for?" asked the Hon. Mike of Dan. "Yer upset the hull business."

"Faix, I lifted me feet at the same time ye did," exclaimed Dan. "It wor Burns what upset us."

"On'y for that red-headed monkey over dere singin' out, we'd ha' had der dead wood on his nibbs," muttered Mr. Growler.

"I was too fly for yer dat time, hey, Old Shoebrush?" laughed Nibbsey, giving his trousers a hoist. "I'm too rich fur yer, I am."

"But oh, what a diff'rence in de mornin', Den comes de copper wid—"

"Niver mind the rist av it," broke in Muldoon. "We can do very well without yer singin', ye Tyrolean wobbler."

"Yer don't call that singin', do yer?" growled the Hon. Mike. "Sounds more like a bullfrog wid a fit. I'm a reg'lar old connosher on music, I am, and yer can't fool—"

"Yare, you know a heap, you do," chuckled Nibbsey. "Why, you don't know enough to go off and die quiet, yer don't."

If that red-headed untrifled youth had not dodged, he would have caught the scrubbing brush right alongside the ear.

"Never touched me; dat's where I get me base—see?" he chuckled, as he skipped out.

"Dere'll be a dead boy found around dese premises some morning, and Mul'll have a funeral to pay fur," muttered Mr. Growler, looking very tough. "Dat kid is getting too fresh."

A yell from the back yard attracted Mike's attention just then.

The voice was that of his son and heir, young Romeo Growler.

"That sounds like yere bye gettin' a lickin', so it do," remarked Muldoon.

"If dat red-head touches my boy I'll bust him in der snoot," said Mike. "I'm a dizzy old rooster from der Rockies and I takes care of me chickens every time, yer bet yer life."

There was another yell and the sound of blows and Mr. Growler started for the rear door.

Before he could reach it it flew open, and in dove Master Growler and nearly butted his respected parent in the stomach.

"Hey, make him stop, he's hittin' me," he yelled.

"Who's hittin' yer?"

"De red head snoozer. I ain't done nothin' an' he pasted me in de snoot. Yah-yah, ow-wow! he's all de t-time d-d-down on me, he is."

"Just wait till I get at him and dere won't be nothin' left of him," muttered the Hon. Mike.

"Faix, av the bye punished that ugly tarrier imp av yours, I'll wager a dollar he deserved it, Mike," said Muldoon, "and he has me permission to do it ivery time."

"Didn't do nothin' to him," howled Romeo. "How'd I know he was comin' out when I chucked the potater? He's too funny."

"So ye foired a potato at the bye, did yez?" asked Muldoon.

"Naw, I didn'. I fired it at de door and he came out and pasted me."

"Where'd he hit yez?"

"On de—ah, I ain't goin' ter tell."

"Yez said he hit ye in the nose."

"Well, so he did."

"Does it hurt yez to sit down?" laughed Muldoon. "Be heavens, yez need more av the same kind and I hope he took a shovel."

"Yer'll spoil dat fresh kid, takin' his part so much, Mul," said Mr. Growler, with a grunt. "Yer'd orter soak him in der jaw, dat's what yer had."

"Sure he's all right," laughed Muldoon, "and I don't doubt yer bye got all that was comin' to him and no more. I ain't sure av he had enough, he heavens!"

"Go on, you old stuff—go get yer hair

mended, it's broken!" cried the young terror.

Muldoon made a dash at the imp, and away he fled with a yell of fear.

Nibbsey afterwards explained the cause of the ruction.

"Dat brat is allus makin' hisself too gay, boss, and dat mornin' he come inter de yard and got ter chuckin' t'ings, and I told him ter stop, and den he goes up on de fire-escape and chucks more."

"Yis, I understand."

"Den I went in and he comes down, and when I ran out, he seen me comin' through de winder and let fly a spud at me and took me on the bugle."

"And ye chastised him?"

"No, I didn't, boss. I just slammed him over a bench, drawed his breeches tight, and walloped blazes out'n him wid me open hand, and a lat' when dat began ter smart."

"An' good for ye," laughed Muldoon. "Yez had a right to take the lath forst, me bye, or a shingle."

Mr. Growler did not take vengeance upon Nibbsey for the walloping his son had received, and things went on as before.

One reason was that he could not have licked Nibbsey if he'd caught him, which latter was hardly possible, and the other was that he was a big blower, and didn't mean half that he said.

A day or so later Muldoon took one of his horses and a light wagon, and went off for a spin on the boulevard and through the park.

He was driving at a moderate speed in the park when some one suddenly passed him, and looking up, he beheld the Hon. Mike Growler, driving a stylish turnout.

"Hallo, Mul, old sport, how goes it, anyhow?"

"Oh, I'm well enough, and—Hallo! where'd yez get the harse and wagon?"

"Do yer like 'em?" asked the Westerner.

"Faith, I do and I like your cheek, too."

"Putty good nag, ain't it, and not a bad wagon?"

"Oh, there's nothin' the matther wid aither the harse or the vehicle, be heavens, but it's ye that have the cast iron gall."

"Der team ain't any worse dan yer own, hey, Mul?"

"Faix, I like that, seeing that yez got it out av me own stable. I marvel at the nerve yez hov, but no, I don't, for I know that yez have the impidence av a brass image."

"Well, yer don't want der hoss to eat his head off in der stable, do yer?" asked Mike. "He needs exercise."

"Maybe he do, but it isn't for ye to give it um. I wondher the byes let yez have um, wan av the best trotters I have, and the new sulky too. Be heavens, I wondher yez didn't take out the span insthud av one."

"One hoss is as good as two for every day riding, Mul, and I ain't got no style about me anyhow. I'm easily satisfied, I am."

"Yez have plenty av gall, I see that, to go borry me horses and carts widout axin' me leave, or sayin' anything about it."

They were driving along together while they talked, Muldoon indignant, the Hon. Mike cheeky and self-possessed, but Muldoon soon grew tired of his companion, and attempted to pass him.

"Bet I beat yer half a mile in two, Mul," said Mr. Growler.

"It's agin the rules to speed yer horses in the park."

"Ah, go on! You're a scared, dat's what's der matter! Yer know blame well yer can't go so fast as me!"

"Go on, ye old stuff! I can!"

"Bet yer a hundred dollars yer can't! Get up!"

Muldoon was not going to let himself be bluffed like that, and he made his nag let himself out.

Along the drive they both went, licketty clip, neck and neck, and everything flying.

"There's no hoodoo tarrier from the West that can bate me at racing or annything else, be heavens!" muttered Muldoon, with set teeth and dogged look as he braced himself back and held the reins firm.

Mr. Growler was bound to beat Muldoon, as he had said he would, but he saw that it was not going to be an easy task,

even although he had the fastest horse, for Muldoon was a better driver than he was.

"Begob, I'll lave th' ould bluff half a mile behind be the time we're out av the park," muttered Muldoon. "Git up there, Jiminy, and show yer heels!"

Both horses were going like the wind, and Muldoon was steadily gaining from knowing better how to manage than did the boastful Lily of Nevada.

As they were going round a curve at reduced speed, Muldoon's horse suddenly shied at an organ-grinder trudging along the road and stopped.

In an instant Muldoon went flying.

His lucky star was in the ascendant just then, or something serious might have happened.

He shot through the air, landed in a hedge on the other side of a wall, crashed through that and tumbled into a ditch full of water.

When he came out he had lost his hat, his coat was torn from his back, his face and hands were scratched, and he was dripping wet in the bargain.

The horse had gone on without him, and so had Mr. Growler.

"Begorry, I niver knew the animal to do that before," he muttered, as he climbed into the road and looked around.

Then along came two mounted policemen.

"Here, we want you," said one. "You can't drive so reckless."

"Go an, I wor not; me horse wor frightened be an Italian. Did yez see him?"

"You'll go with us," said the other, and just then two regular park coppers in gray came up.

These two proceeded to lug Muldoon toward the gates, in spite of his protests.

On the way they came upon the Hon. Mike sitting in his wagon by the roadside.

He laughed when he saw Muldoon, and said:

"Dat's right, officers, take him in; he's der most reckless driver in der hull city. He wanted me ter race with him, but I wouldn't."

"Begob, I like yer cheek!" gasped Muldoon. "Faix, yez were racin' wid me, and av me harse hadn't shied I'd 've bet yez. Take the sucker in, min; it's my horse he has shtolen out av my stable."

The men lugged Muldoon away, and later his horse was found all right.

It happened that the police captain before whom Muldoon was taken was a friend of the latter's, and it was not long before our landlord was free.

"Be heavens, the cheek and gall av that loud-mouthed Mick, Mike Growler, is something to marvel at!" muttered Muldoon, as he drove home; "but av he gets annything av mine again he's welcome to it."

One day there were complaints from Mrs. Schumacher on the top floor that the roof leaked.

If Mrs. Finnegan had been the complainant, Muldoon would have hesitated about paying any attention to the matter.

However, as the German woman was peaceable enough when not stirred up and dragged into a row by the Irish lady on the floor below, our landlord concluded to investigate the matter.

"I'll attind to it right away, Mrs. Shoemaker," he said, politely. "I'll be up there directly and see what ails it."

In a short time he went up, knocked on the door of Mrs. Schumacher's flat and was admitted by the lady herself.

"Where do the trouble seem to be most prevalent, ma'm?" he asked.

"Vat you said?" asked the lady, blankly.

"Phwere is the overflow most conspicuous?" asked Muldoon, using a different form of question.

"Ya, I dink so, aber I don't know ome execkly," muttered the puzzled woman.

"Whereabouts is the leak in the roof, ma'm?" blurted out Muldoon.

"Oh, ya, I understood dot. Come mit me, I chow you dot leak once."

"Be heavens, yez hov to be very sedate in yer language to thim Dutch," muttered Muldoon, as he followed the lady out.

"They don't comprehend only the plainest terrums, they don't."

"Dere it was once, you see dot?" said Frau Schumacher, pointing to a spot on

the kitchen ceiling, as big as both her hands, over by one of the windows.

"Faix, I do see it and it's got to be attinded to. I'll go up at wanst and see if I can locate it."

"Maybe you was better found out once where dot water come in once, ain't it?" returned the lady.

"Yis, that's phwat I mean. I'll go up at wanst."

"Und you got dot roof maker mans to come and fix it already?"

"Yis, whin I find out phwere it is. Av I lave it to him he'll be wantin' to put on a whole new roof. I know thim fellers."

"Yah, I dink so," said the lady, with a broad smile.

Muldoon went out and made his way to the roof, which he proceeded to examine carefully.

While he was on his knees nosing around about the gutters and waste pipe, he heard a yell not far away.

It was one of the kind most fittingly described as fiendish.

There was something most decidedly blood-curdling about it, in fact.

Muldoon's hair assumed the perpendicular with great promptness, and he looked around.

Not far away and coming toward him was a wild-eyed, long-haired individual, carrying a small arsenal belted around his waist.

His trousers were tucked in his boots, he wore a stove-pipe hat, and his hair was longer than that of Burns, the poet.

His collar was missing, but he had huge wristbands turned back over his coat-cuffs, and he seemed to be a mixture of cowboy, spring poet, seedy lawyer and tramp.

"Ha, ha! Now is my time!" he howled, rushing at Muldoon.

He had two big horse pistols in his fists and his belt was full of revolvers and knives, while others protruded from his boot tops.

As he came on he let out that yell again.

"Howly mackerel! phwat is it?" gasped Muldoon, struggling to his feet.

It was a lunatic, but Muldoon did not know that at the time.

He glanced toward the fire-escape, being at the edge of the roof, but the lunatic was nearer to it than he was.

"Ha, ha! I am Long-legged Joe, the avenger!" yelled the man, "and I have sworn to kill all Irishmen."

Bang!
Crack!

He opened fire on Muldoon at once and began blazing away in good earnest.

Not merely one shot but half a dozen did he fire.

Either he was a bad shot or his revolvers were loaded with blanks, for Muldoon wasn't hit once.

That did not help matters any, however.

Muldoon got out of the way as soon as he could, for he could not tell at what moment a ball might go skurrying through his body.

Besides that, the fellow had knives and might be tempted to use them.

Crack!
Bang!

Trembling with fright and as cold as ice, Muldoon made a break for the door leading below.

The lunatic quickly intercepted him, putting in one of those gentle yells of his, to make things doubly pleasant.

"Ha, ha, ha! come here and let me carve you!" he shrieked.

"Oh, glory! I'm kilt, so I am!" gasped Muldoon, making a break. "Who is he and where did he come from, anyhow?"

He was a lunatic, as I have intimated, and he came from the next house.

This was of the same height as the flats, while the next one on the other side was a good two stories lower.

He was a bad man, that lunatic was, or thought himself one, and he had been lock-up in the top story while somebody went for the man to take him to the asylum.

They had not thought anything about the scuttle, to which the man had access.

He could not go down-stairs, but he could reach the roof, and that's what he had done.

Muldoon broke away when he saw the

lunatic in his path and skipped across the roof.

After him ran the man, blazing away and yelling in that re-assuring style of his.

Muldoon's hair stood on end, his hat was gone and he was half scared to death.

Over the roofs he ran, the lunatic chasing him and firing every two or three seconds.

Poor Muldoon imagined himself hit a dozen times.

He tried to make the scuttle of the next house, but he could not, the man was so near him.

Bang!
Crack!

Over the roofs ran Muldoon, seeing no chance of escape.

The lunatic followed close behind, yelling and shrieking and firing off guns.

As fast as he emptied one he would drop it and seize another.

The roofs of four or five houses were littered with empty revolvers by the time Muldoon had gone as far as he could.

He finally came to a house a full story higher than the one he was on.

"Howly sailor! I can't get away from him afther all!" he gasped.

On came the avenger, still firing and yelling.

"Ha, ha! I am Crazy Charlie, the cowboy avenger!" he shouted, "and I shoot fourteen men before each meal!"

"Tare an' 'ounds, why isn't there a scuttle open?" gasped Muldoon, doubling suddenly on his tracks and making a dash toward the front of the house.

The avenger fired and Muldoon rushed for the lee side of a big chimney.

He reached it in safety, and for a moment the lunatic missed him.

"Ha! Where is he?" he yelled, blazing away again.

Muldoon stuck his head out from behind the chimney, to take a survey of the situation.

"Aha! is it there ye are?" he muttered. "Be heavens, av this wor only me own house now."

"Ha, ha! down with the Turks and hurrah for the wild West!" yelled the man without all of his buttons, making a dash at Muldoon.

PART XIX.

AS the howling lunatic made a rush for Muldoon, the latter made a break.

He might have dodged around the chimney, but he was too badly rattled for that.

Instead he flew over the roofs, retracing the route he had just come, the lunatic following.

More revolvers now littered the way, but the man evidently had a large reserve, for he kept on firing.

Finally Muldoon reached the end of his own roof and could go no further.

"Kape off!" he cried desperately. "This is me own house—kape off, I say!"

"Ha, ha! I will have revenge!" said the lunatic, advancing, while Muldoon flattened himself against the chimney.

"This is me own house, I tell ye!" he muttered, nearly out of breath. "Who are ye, annyhow, and phwat do yez want? Get out av this! I own the primises and I order ye aff."

"Ha! down with monopolists," roared the man with a wild look. "You own this house?"

"Yis."

"Then go down-stairs."

"Faix, I'd be glad to, av yez'd only pit up yer gun."

"Go down, I say, ha-ha-ha!" and the maniac laughed that hyena-like cackle of his.

"Well, I'm going," said Muldoon, starting forward.

"Ha-ha, no, not that way, down the chimney."

"Down the chimney is it? Howly fiddler! I'll be smothered."

"Down the chimney, I say, you bald-headed gorilla of a monopolist," roared the lunatic. "Come, get up!"

A pair of big revolvers pointed at Muldoon's head expedited the latter's movements most decidedly.

He climbed the chimney not without considerable difficulty, and crouched on top.

"Down with you or I'll shoot the top of your head off," cried the crank, waving his guns about in a most alarming fashion.

Muldoon hurriedly let himself down the biggest opening he could find.

He went down as far as his shoulders, and then held on by his hands.

"I'll be choked intirely av I go down," he protested. "Come off, can't yer? Be heavens, this is no joke."

"Down with you!" roared the man, taking aim.

Down went Muldoon's head in a jiffy as a shot rang out.

He wasn't hurt, but he was frightened enough to have been, and down he dropped

as that of Mrs. Finnegan.

"Help! I'm being smothered!" he shouted. "Help me out of this!"

Mary Jane Finnegan gave another yell, and called to her mother to catch the burglar.

Mrs. Finnegan came into the sitting-room with a broom in her fist.

"Phwere is the robber?" she demanded.

"In the chimney closet."

"Open the door and I'll bat um whin he comes eout."

"No, I'm a-scared."

"Go an, do as I bid yez."

"But he'll hit me."

"Thin you take the broom and I'll open the dure."

the front av the fire-place and let me eout!"

"Phwat's that you say?" asked Mrs. Finnegan, getting up. "Kape quiet, Mary, till I listen. Is that ye, Muldoon?"

"It is, be heavens!"

"Where are yez?"

"Shtuck in the chimley. Take out the front."

"I'll not, thin," said the lady, decidedly.

"Oh, yis, do."

"I will not."

"For why are yez so hard-hearted?"

Sure, I can't stay here all day."

"Yez'll have to, for all av me, Muldoon."

"Ah, go an, let me out!"

"I can't take out the heater, can I?"



All hands laid hold of the rope and hauled away. When Muldoon appeared at the opening he was something to look at. He was as black as an African, and his clothes were just saturated with soot.

twenty feet through the dark, the soot and the roughness.

He was scratched from head to foot, his clothes were torn and his eyes, nose, mouth and ears filled with soot, dust and ashes.

He suddenly brought up all standing, having reached the bottom of the flue.

"Help, help, take me out or I'll be strangled," he cried in a smothered voice.

For a time no attention was paid to him.

He managed to lift his head and looking up, saw a blue patch above him.

"I can't be so far down," he mused, beginning to sneeze. "The sky looks blue, and I don't see any stars."

Then he sneezed again, and gave his head a bang.

"Hallo, help! get me out av this!" he bawled.

In another moment he heard a piano being played.

"Phwat's that, 'Annie Rooney' or 'Tara-ra-boom? Faix, I wondher if it's—help, get me out!" he yelled, louder than ever.

Then there was a shriek, the playing stopped, and a voice cried:

"Help, help, burglars! Ma, come here, there's a burglar in the closet."

"Go an, and don't bother me," answered a distant voice, which Muldoon recognized

"Hallo, Mrs. Finnegan, it's me!" cried Muldoon. "I'm up the chimley, so I am."

"Sure, that's Muldoon's vice," muttered Mrs. Finnegan.

Then she absentmindedly opened the door of the closet.

Muldoon yelled again at that instant.

Mary Ann, convinced that there was a burglar in the closet, aimed a crack at him with the broom.

Mrs. Finnegan got the first one, and sat down.

A set of dishes, used only on Sundays and St. Patrick's Day, got the next.

Crash!

Boom!

Smash!

"Glory be to goodness, Mary Jane, phwat are yez doin' at all?"

"Where is he—oh, where is he? Oh—oh—oh—wee—ee!" and the serio-comic let out a scream that a tragic actress might have envied.

Signora Piscatelli, on the floor below, called up to know what all that fuss was about, and Frau Schumacher gave it as her opinion that there would be leaks if Muldoon kept on dancing on the roof.

"Let me out!" yelled Muldoon. "Hi-hi, Mrs. Finnegan, it's here I am! Take away

"That's so, yez cannot," replied Muldoon. "Well, thin, go sind for a man wid a rope."

"Are ye in the chimley?"

"I am."

"How did yez get there?"

"I fell down."

"Troth, I thought yez had more sinse."

"I wor thrown in, ma'am."

"Well, thin, climb out."

"Be heavens, I niver tho't av that!" muttered Muldoon.

It was one thing to think of it and another to do it, however.

He tried, and managed to get up two or three feet, and then he slipped and went down again.

He sent a lot of stuff and rubbish tumbling into the Finnegan heater, and cleared the flue out pretty well, but that's all he did do.

Mrs. Finnegan, being appealed to, laughed, asked him how he liked it, and would he have his lunch sent down to him.

"Ah, go an, sind for a man to get me out," wailed Muldoon. "I can't climb up, it's too narrer and too high."

"Oh, I guess yez'll kape," laughed the lady. "Ye can't trouble us much there,

and av yez make too much n'ise I'll pour down some water on yez."

"Won't yez sind for a man, Mrs. Finnegan?"

"Maybe I will."

"Ye will?"

"Whin I get ready," laughed his ancient enemy, going away.

Mrs. Piscatelli and the German woman, and also Major Buster's wife and Dan's better half heard some of the conversation, which on Muldoon's part was carried on in a high key, and they went for the help which Mrs. Finnegan would not procure.

Dan Muldoon, the major, the Hon. Mike Growler, Nibbsey and Mr. Burns, the poet, were soon summoned, and then a rope was procured.

"Well, I'll take me o' t'!" laughed Nibbsey, "if I ever tort de boss would turn chimley sweep."

"I'm a experienced old globe jumper meself and I've seen lots o' funny tings," remarked the Hon. Mike Growler, "but dis one takes der cake."

"Where are yez, Terry?" called out Dan down one of the flues.

"In the Finnegan chimney."

"Which wan is that?"

"How do I know, be heavens!"

"Wait till I drop a brick down aich wan and whin it hits yez, sing out."

"Get an eout av that! Do yez want to kill me? I'm in this wan. Faix, I see the ugly mug av yez now bechune me and the light."

"Oh, it's there ye are, hey?" snorted Dan.

"Yis."

"Then yez can stay there av I'm so ugly lookin'."

"Ah, cheese it," interrupted Nibbsey. "Why don't yer let de boss out? Yer never took a prize in a beauty show, did yer? Course not! What are yer beefin' about? You make me tired."

"Come on, I'm a jolly old sea dog meself, and I like nuthin' better dan pullin' on a rope," said Mike. "Chuck it down and let's see how Mul looks."

Then Mr. Growler dropped down about four fathoms more of rope than there was any need for. Muldoon got a full crack on the head in consequence.

"Hould an! phwat are yez doin' at all?" he bawled. "Sure I didn't tell yez to t'row down a whole coil av rope."

"Tie de end round yer, boss, and let's know when you're ready," called out Nibbsey.

Muldoon did so, and then all hands laid hold of the rope and hauled away.

When Muldoon appeared at the opening he was something to look at.

He was as black as an African, and his clothes were just saturated with soot.

"I say, boss, de next time any o' dem women wants de chimney cleaned out we'll let you down," laughed Nibbsey, when Muldoon got down and stood on the roof.

"Faix, he makes a good job av it," added Dan. "I don't believe there's a bushel av soot left in the whole flue."

"I got a good scheme, Mul," chuckled the Hon. Mike. "Der wild man o' der Zulus down to der musee is took sick, and if yer go down yer kin get a job right away."

Muldoon shook himself, and sent out a black cloud from which all hands retreated, as he remarked:

"Yez all think yezselves funny, but, be heavens, I dar' anny av yez to go troo phwat I hov' and still be alive to tell it."

"What happened ye, Terry?"

"I wor nearly murdered be a maniac, shot full av holes, and thin thrun down the chimley av me own house."

"Shot, is it?"

"Be a madman?"

"When was dis, Mul?"

"Well, I take me oat!"

Muldoon explained the circumstances as he took off his coat and gave it a shake.

When the dust had blown away, the garment was examined.

Not a single bullet hole could be found.

Neither were any stray revolvers to be seen.

The lunatic and his arsenal had been removed while Muldoon was still in the chimney.

The man submitted to capture like a lamb, and his keepers gathered up the

stray weapons and hustled the whole business down-stairs.

They asked no questions, and did not know that Muldoon was down the chimney.

Afterward the story came out, and Muldoon was found not to have been romancing. The revolvers were proved to be quite harmless, moreover, as they contained only blanks.

It took Muldoon the best part of the day to get clean, and after that he declared that he would not go upon the roof for any one, unless accompanied by an escort.

Mrs. Schumacher had her roof fixed, and after that Muldoon referred all complaints to Nibbsey, and left the flats alone for several days.

"I don't see why yez don't hire a janitor and lave the place to him," suggested Mrs. Muldoon one day.

"Yis, and be robbed like I wor before," answered Muldoon.

"That's not necessary. Sure there's honest men still living in the world."

"Yis, but they're hard to find, and it takes more than a lantern to do it these days, Bedalia."

"Well, ye've got to trust somebody, and ye'll always have trouble so long as ye de-mean yersilf be taking care av yer own flats. Sure, I don't know another man that does it."

"Maybe not," said Muldoon, "but I always wor peculiar, and av I took a notion to make the fires and sweep out I'd do it."

"Troth, I think ye would, and that's all the sinse yez have," retorted the lady, getting her back up and for the time the affair ended just there.

After an absence of about a week Muldoon began to go around to the flats again, for which Nibbsey was grateful as he liked company.

On the third or fourth morning after Muldoon's return, the Hon. Mike Growler came into the office one morning looking as gay as a barber's pole.

"Hallo, Mul, old jayhawk, how is things?" he asked. "I thought you'd shoooken der place."

"Did yez miss me much, Mike?" asked Muldoon, lightly.

"Every day."

"And wor ye down here to see me ivery day?"

"Yer bet yer life I was. Ask der red-head if I wasn't."

"Yare, you was here all de time," said Nibbsey. "Why don't yer go to work?"

"That's a leadin' question, be heavens, Mike," laughed Muldoon. "Can yez answer it or do yez throw yersilf upon the purtection av the coort?"

"I'll blow dat young snoozer's head off, so I will," growled Mike, looking black. "I'm a bad man and when I gets riled, I—"

"Yis, I know, but why don't yez go to work, annyhow?" asked Muldoon. "Faix, I don't think ye've put yer hand to a job in two years."

"Ah, well, I ain't takin' every job that comes up," grunted Mr. Growler. "I'm partic'lar, I am. Der Lily of Nevada is a high-toned plant and yer gotter put rose water and cologne on her. She can't stand no soap suds and dish slops, see?"

"I see that ye're gettin' so lazy dat yer can't hardly walk," sneered Muldoon. "Sure, it's nothing but holdin' down chairs ye are, half the day."

"Bet yer I kin run around the block quicker'n you kin, dis minute," said the Hon. Mike, who did not relish the plain language Muldoon had been giving him.

"Go an, yez couldn't beat me running up-stairs."

"Tell yer wot I'll do, Mul," said Mike, taking the cigar from his mouth, and cocking his hat over both eyes.

"What's that, go to work?"

"Naw! Who said anything about workin'? Bet yer I'll skip up der fire-escape to der roof and back again quicker'n you kin. You take one side and I'll take the other."

"Go up the laddher and down again, is it?"

"Yes, and I bet yer I'll beat yer two floors. Yer don't know what a climber I am, Mul. Der monks at der park ain't in it when I'm around."

"Faix, yez are no better climber than

me, be heavens, and I'll prove it. Come an out, ye ould gas bag and I'll show yez phwat a climber I am."

"Bet yer five dollars I go up and down fust."

"I'll go yez!"

Out into the back yard they went, Nibbsey accompanying them as referee and looking for lots of fun.

"Say when ye're ready, boss, and I'll give yer a start," said the latter.

Muldoon and Mike each stood at the foot of the ladder, all ready for the ascent.

"Are ye ready?"

"Yis."

"Bet yer life!"

"Let her go! Scoot!"

Up they went, round after round, like a couple of monkeys, and for one or two flights neither appeared to have the advantage. When they reached the Italian floor Mike was a little ahead, but Muldoon put on a spurt and passed him.

The spurt was a little too much for him, however, and he slipped when passing the windows of Mrs. Finnegan.

One foot slipped, and he straddled the rung of the ladder, one toe smashing in Mrs. Finnegan's kitchen window.

The lady heard the crash and ran to see what it all meant.

In drawing out his foot, Muldoon kicked a hole out of another pane.

"Go an, ye big slob, phwat are yez doin' anyhow. Sure the fire escape is no place for a race coorse; have yez no sinse at all, nor any manners aither, ye ugly lookin' baboon; sure it's belt the head aff ye I will, av yez don't stop harassin a dacint respectable woman," rattled Madam Finnegan without stopping for breath.

By the time Muldoon had extricated himself and was ready to go on she had hoisted the window and was poking at him savagely with a broom.

"Hould on, look out phwat yez are about or ye'll trow me off, be heavens!" yelled Muldoon in alarm.

He managed to get by at last but not until he had got a good whacking over the legs with the hard end of the broom.

By this time the Hon. Mike had reached the roof and was starting down again.

"Faix I'll not go down that way agen," muttered Muldoon.

"Yer gotter go the way yer come, or it's no match," muttered Mike.

"I'll change wid yez and ye can go that way."

Just then there was a howl from Mrs. Schumacher on the top floor.

She saw Muldoon, thought he was a burglar and rushed out upon him with a fire-shovel.

"Begorry, I believe it's a put-up job all around," he muttered as he hurried by and reached the roof.

By that time Mike Growler was on the third floor.

"Faix, I'll not go past them ould daisies agin av I know mesilf," said Muldoon. "I know phwat I'll do. I'll rin down-stairs and bate Mike afther all and swear that I wint down be the fire-escape."

Then he made a break for the door and hurried down.

When he reached the first floor below the roof, out rushed old woman Schumacher, with a big club in her hand, yelling and screaming at the top of her voice.

Muldoon got a whack in the back as he passed and then out came Mrs. Finnegan.

"Robbers, polices, watches, burglars, polices, murder!" yelled the excited Dutch-woman.

As Muldoon flew down he got a belt on the head from Finnegan's broom and at the same time out rushed Mrs. Piscatelli armed with a rolling pin.

There was a regular gantlet of women for Muldoon to run and he wasn't sure if he would survive it or not.

He tried to explain but they wouldn't have it.

Every instant the crowd of women grew larger and more excited.

"Av I get safe out av all this," muttered Muldoon, "it'll be only becos the fairies always love the Irish and be no good luck av me own, be heavens!"

PART XX.

DOWN-STAIRS rushed Muldoon, pursued, waited for and surrounded by a mob of angry and excited females.

Dutch, Irish, French, Italian, Scandinavian, Southern, Eastern and New Yorkers were represented.

Every woman in the house, old or young, joined in the hue and cry, and Muldoon had to run for his life, or at any rate his safety from personal violence.

The Hon. Mike Growler must have heard the racket, but the Lily of Nevada was a modest plant just then, and preferred to lower its head and lie in the shade rather than flaunt its leaves in the open sunshine.

In other words, Mr. Growler was a very discreet man, and knew when he was well off.

He took no part in the disturbance, and remained in the quiet seclusion of the cellar, awaiting such time as it would be safe, politic and convenient for him to venture forth.

Nibbsey, the faithful, had seen his master's plight on the fire-escape, and suspected that trouble would arise.

He rushed in, heard the rapidly swelling tumult, and hurried up-stairs to Muldoon's assistance.

It was vain for him to attempt a rescue, however.

There was no fire-hose handy, an alarm of rats would not have been heard, he had no water buckets, and the women were too many for him altogether.

Then, too, he could not get anywhere near Muldoon, and had to stay on the outskirts of the scrimmage.

Those women made it exceedingly hot for Muldoon, more so than ever before, in fact.

They had no respect whatever for his clothes, his personal appearance or his disposition, but riddled all three.

There are some scenes which men go through and have no recollection of afterwards, and this was one of them.

How Muldoon got away from those women and out of the house he could never tell.

What he did do was to fall into the hands of a policeman the very first thing.

The man was for taking him in at once on a charge of being drunk and disorderly, the usual charge of officious officers, but Muldoon resented this.

"Faix, anny wan can see that I'm not drunk," he expostulated, "though I'll admit that I'm decidedly disorderly in me appearance. It's a wondher thim hags left annything on me at all. Faix, it seems like a nightmare, and I have no positive reminbrance av how it all happened."

"You'll have to go with me," said the man. "Your house has been complained of several times and something has got to be done about it. I don't believe you have a license."

"License, is it!" repeated Muldoon. "Faix, and what wud I want a license for? Do yez think it's a saloon I kape, ye ignoramus?"

"Well, you'll have to prove that to the judge. I've had orders to pull your place before now, but I thought maybe you'd be more quiet."

"Ye're a dom liar!" cried Muldoon, in a rage. "Yez have had nothing av the kind, and for two pins I'd have ye fired off the foorce, ye sthupid idjot!"

The copper was bound to arrest Muldoon after that, in order to preserve his own dignity.

"I'll go wid yez," said Muldoon, "for the satisfaction av havin' ye ripremanded before yer own face, so I will. Come on, me bantam. Sure I'd like nothing better."

Just then out rushed all the women.

Seeing Muldoon in the grasp of the law, as they supposed, they all set up a howl of triumph.

"Ach, dot's righd. Dake him up mit der station-house, der Irish loafer. He hit me off der snood."

"Sacre! He shall go to prrhison, ze meezerhable villain!"

"Taka de loaf to a cool! Locka him up! Givea him tena year!"

"Hooroo! It's a good thing yez cot um. He nearly broke me jaw, he did, and I

hope he'll get two years on th' island, the onmannerly vilyan!"

"Av yez don't lock him up, I'll have the lah on yez."

"Drat the man, he's a nuisance and I hope he'll get a hundred years at hard labor, the homely old bald headed skunk."

Every one of those women had something to say and they didn't hesitate about saying it either.

Muldoon was lugged away to the nearest police station and then at his own request taken to court, which was then in session.

He thought it would be an easy matter to prove that the officer had exceeded his duty in the premises but he did not count upon the vindictiveness of those women.

His case was soon called and he got up to speak for himself.

His clothes were torn, one of his eyes were black, his nose was greatly swelled and he did not look at all prepossessing.

"What's the charge?" asked the judge.

"There's no charge agin me at all, your honor," began Muldoon. "Me arrist is an outrage, and I demand me immajit discharge. I'll tell you just how it all happened—"

Then up jumped a dozen or more women from the spectators' seats.

Half of them made a dash for the witness-box, and three or four of them got in it.

The others crowded around the rail, some got as far as the table under the judge's bench, and all began to talk at once.

All shook their fists at Muldoon, all yelled at the top of their voices, and each wanted to tell her story first.

"Silence!" roared the judge, pounding the desk with his gavel.

That did not do a bit of good.

The women were all determined to make a charge against Muldoon, and each wanted to make hers first.

"Small chance av a man gettin' a show agin thim ould hins," muttered Muldoon.

"Silence—order in the court—keep quiet!" bowled His Honor, thumping the desk for dear life.

"Chudge, yer Honor, dot mans hid me mit der nose by his fists once."

"Give him six months, judge, he's a bad man, and iverybody will tell yez the same; sure, he kicked me in the face, so he did, and he's foriver—"

"Silence!"

"Irisha loaf no gooda, comea to mea flat, pulla de hair, breaka de dish, blacka de eye—no good, wanta get locka up."

"*Mon Dieu!* Zat man drrhive me crrhazy, m'sieur—strhike wiz hees foot, ze horrible rhuffian!"

"Shut up!" yelled His Honor, forgetting himself and coming down to good fighting talk. "Shat up the whole of you, or I'll give you all ten years apiece!"

By dint of hammering on the desk and calling in a lot of officers, His Honor finally succeeded in obtaining silence.

Then he called for one story at a time and threatened to lock the women up if they interrupted one another.

Mrs. Finnegan swore that Muldoon had insulted and beaten her in her own rooms.

Mrs. Schumacher declared that he struck her and offered to bring any number of witnesses to prove it.

Mrs. Piscatelli brought a similar charge and swore by all that was good that it was true.

Mrs. Dubois alleged that he had attacked her with great violence and clamored for his punishment.

The others all had like stories to tell and Muldoon was made out a terrible creature.

"Thim women wud swear away the characther av a saint, be heavens, and yez cah't believe a worrud they say," protested Muldoon.

"Silence, sir!" said the judge. "Remember that you are under oath."

"Troth, yez had better remind the ladies av that, for I'm sure ivery wan has jorgotten all about it."

"Silence, sir, or I'll have you committed for contempt of court."

"Be heavens thin, it's not much respect I have for it," retorted Muldoon, getting mad. "Thim ould hens are all down on me becos I'm their landlord, and some av thim don't pay anny rint aither, and they'd swear to anny lie to get aven wid me."

"Silence, sir, you must not talk like that in this—"

"Faix, I will thin and I'd like to see yez shtop me," Muldoon went on, throwing all discretion aside. "Sure ivery man has a right to be h'ard in his own defince. I'm a thure American citizen and I demand to be—"

"Have you a lawyer in court?" interposed the judge.

"I have not and I don't want anny, I'm me own lawyer and I'll prove to yer satisfaction—"

"I've always heard it said that a man who is his own lawyer generally has a fool for his client," said the judge, testily.

"Faix, thin he'll be only on a par wid the coort thin," snapped Muldoon.

"Silence, sir! How dare you address the Court in that manner! You are fined—"

How much it was no one could tell, for all the women began to talk again.

His honor had them all fired out, and then gave Muldoon a chance to speak.

The latter told his story, but it did not do any good.

The women were believed and Muldoon was sentenced to spend six months on the Island, or pay a fine of two hundred dollars.

Just then Nibbsey came rushing in without hat or coat, and dragging Roger Muldoon after him.

"I say, judge, yer honor," cried the boy, "dis is all a fake! De boss had de worst of it from de start, and dem women is all dead agin him. He was just tryin' to get down-stairs in his own house, and dem chromos dey all set onto him. Take me oat', judge, yer never saw such a lot o' liars in all yer life! Here's de boss's son, yer honor, and he's a gentleman, and he'll tell yer just how de ole man is worried wid dem crows."

"Case is closed," said the judge, but Roger gave him a wink and the young fellow was invited to a seat on the bench.

The court knew Roger, but did not know Muldoon, and the affable young man soon convinced him that his father was a victim of misplaced confidence.

His Honor belonged to the same club that Roger did and was a nominee for the office of president, and if Roger had chosen to exert his influence, that magistrate's likeness would have smiled at the wall paper thenceforth, and he knew it.

Consequently, when all was quiet and order was once more restored, his Honor said:

"Sentence in the case of Terrence Muldoon is indefinitely suspended, and the defendant allowed to go upon his own recognizances."

"The mon has some sinse afther all, be heavens, and it war me own eloquence that saved the day," remarked Muldoon, as he went out with Roger.

Then turning to Nibbsey, who was following in the rear, he said:

"Plase receive me eternal gratichude, me bye. Sure, I know I've got wan frind if no more, and I'll niver forget yez so long as I live, begob."

"Ah, cheese it, boss," said the young fellow. "Dat's all right. I knowed dem women was tryin' to down yer and dat dey'd do anything to get yer sent up. I heard 'em talkin' about it. Dere wasn't one o' dem dat didn't tell more lies in a minute dan she could back up in a month."

"I say, pop," said Roger, "why don't you give up the flats?"

"Give thim up!" echoed Muldoon. "Sure they're the best payin' property I have in these parts."

"I mean give up trying to run them yourself. Put in a good janitor and shake the thing yourself entirely."

"Be heavens I'll do it!" cried Muldoon, emphatically. "I had the same idee meself. I'm sick and tired av havin' charge av such a nest av squabblers. Sure nothing can suit thim."

"If yer take my advice, boss, yer'll fire de hull gang out o' de place and get a new lot. Dat's what yer orter done six months back."

"I believe ye're right," said Muldoon. "and I'll do it."

That very day every tenant in the house received two days' notice to get out.

The month was about up, or would be at the end of the time given, and as no leases

had been given, Muldoon claimed that he had a right to do as he had done.

In order to have things square, however, he leased the entire house to Roger at so much a year for a term of years, and as fast as the tenants kicked, this document was fluttered in their faces.

It was funny to see the different way in which the gang received their notices.

The Italians never said a word, but were out of the house several hours before the limit set to their stay.

The French woman came down to the office where Muldoon sat, snapped her fingers, tossed her head, gave a little hysterical shriek, and rattled away in this fashion:

"You sink I care zat you tell me to leave ze house? Pouf! I care zat! *Pourquoi* I care to leave in ze house keep by one grand loafer, wiz ze Italian, ze Irish and ze Doatch! V'la! I go, I hafe already make up ze mind to go seex week. I care nossing for ze dismiss. I hafe pay ze rent, I laugh to ze face of ze Irish peeg. Chut! I would not leave in ze house eef you pay me. Pouf!"

Then she flounced out of the place, leaving an atmosphere of garlic, rancid hair oil and sour wine behind her.

"It bates all how independent some people can be," chuckled Muldoon. "Well, she gav' me no trouble, annyhow, and it's little I care for her hysterics."

Not long afterward the German frau came down, and in a high key launched out upon Muldoon thus:

"Mein cracious, you dinks I stay mit der house efter vot I dook von you for der lest six monts? Nein! I hafe already der house pigged oud vere I vent, und you could took dot notitz and lighd your ceegars mit him, you loafermans, *du Schweinaigle, du spitzbube, du verdammter!*"

"Exactly; I understand," said Muldoon, with a laugh. "Compliments are thick when the four hundred are let loose."

Mrs. Finnegan next tackled Muldoon and let off a blue streak of abuse.

"Give me notus to quit, is it," she began, "whin I've always been reg'lar and prompt wid me rint and niver axin' for aven an hour's delay, and always kep' me flat in ordher, and never had no n'ise nor ructions, and was always peaceably inclined and frinds wid ivery wan in the house, avin the I-talians? But that's the way wid these upstart Irish; there's no accountin' for the airs they do put on phwin they get a little money! But as for bein' anny betther nor annybody ilse—sure, there's Duffy over on the dumps widout

two coats to his back, I hov' more respect now than—"

"Heavens, woman, are yez wound up or an' day, and is it a Waterbury watch fma' spring yez hav' for a tongue that it goes so fasht and so consthant?" interrupted Muldoon. "Begorra, yez can talk fasther than a mule can kick."

"Faix, I'll not say much more thin, but it'll be to the p'int and full av raison," rejoined Mrs. Finnegan, "and it's this, that I'm not goin' to lave on anny such notus, and I'll have the lah on yez av ye thry to put me out."

"Begob, I have no authority over yez at all, me dear woman," said Muldoon. "I've leased the flats to other parties, and it's thim that wants possession, not me at all." That floored the lady Finnegan, and she had no more to say.

What was more, she was out of the house before twelve o'clock of the last day set, as were all the paying tenants.

It was funny, but those who had really paid for their quarters were the smallest kickers, and the ones most prompt in vacating.

It was the barnacles, the leeches, and the suckers of the house, that made the most disturbance about going out.

One of the worst of the lot was the Hon. Mike Growler, of Nevada, ex-congressman and general nuisance.

He came down to the office, sat on the back of a chair, tipped his hat over his eyes, spat on the floor and said:

"Looker here, Muldoon, me and you has been pards fur a good many years, we've traveled together, borried money from each other, slept with each other and been on der booze together and now yer tell me I gotter get out. It's mean, dat's what it is, it's mean."

"Well, I can't help ut av ut is. I've out-grown thim times ye speak av and now I know betther. Ye're nuthin' but an ould sucker, Mike Growler, and ye'll niver do a sthroke av worruk so long as ye think yez can get a dollar out av me."

"Ain't I yer sisher's husband and ain't I der nearest relation yer got? I'm a bloomin' old buzzard o' der wilderness, I am, with a pink top-knot and blue feet and I allus sticks to my tribe. Yer never found me goin' back on der Muldoons like you're a-goin' back on me."

"Why would ye?" laughed Muldoon. "Be heavens its yer bread and butther not to go back on thim, ye ould bluff. Niver mind anny more av yer reminiscences nor romances, Mike. I'm determined to make yez stand on yer own feet and out av the

house ye go be the forst av the month; av I hov to evict yez mesilf."

Then the Hon. Mike tried the pathetic dodge and wept, but it did no good and then he got mad and wanted to lick Muldoon, but he did not all the same.

Mr. Burns the poet took hold of him on one side and the walking delegate on the other and the three adjourned to a neighboring Bodega to solace themselves with the cup that frequently cheers but more generally inebriates.

That was not the last seance that Muldoon had with the Nevada Lily, for Mike kicked like a mule and tried to bluff his brother-in-law the worst way.

It ended in Mr. Growler going out with his wife and family, storing his household goods and going out to Idaho or Montana or some other wild western wilderness a long way off.

It was Muldoon who paid for the tickets, however.

Mrs. Dan Muldoon made almost as much trouble as Mr. Growler had done, and, as for Major Buster, he got very mad, abused Muldoon like a horse-thief, challenged him to fight a duel and used a great deal of incendiary language, to all of which Muldoon paid no attention, but philosophically remarked to the ceiling:

"Let the ould fire-eater talk. Sure, he's nothin' but a bag o' wind, annyhow, and whin the gas gives out, he'll fall flat, be heavens."

He did, for a fact, and there was no more trouble.

Dan and his wife went back to New Hampshire, and started a summer boarding-house. The major and his lady returned to Virginia, Mr. Burns, the poet, got a job as courier and guide to a party about to visit Ireland and the rest of the gang scattered in different directions.

Only Nibbsey was left, but he could not be called one of the gang for he was of some use.

That red-headed youth once more donned a page's livery and made himself useful if not an ornament to the house in Madison avenue and for the present we will leave him there.

Roger found a good tenant for the apartment house, one who was willing to take the whole business on his hands and sublet it at his own risk, and Muldoon was rid of the whole thing, and to-day you won't find a quieter, better appointed, more popular or more remunerative a lot of rooms to rent than those comprised in MULDOON'S FLATS.

[THE END.]

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